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VOL. I.

“For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.”—PAUL.

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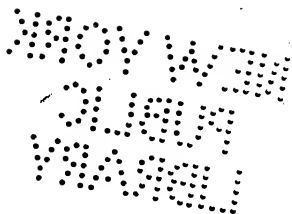
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P R E F A C E.

WE look back, on the completion of this, our first volume, to what we had proposed to ourselves when we undertook this work—to the extent to which we have, as yet, been enabled to fulfil our intentions, and the degree of success which has, hitherto, attended our labours; and we avail ourselves of this opportunity to lay a brief statement of each of these before our readers. For our *object* then—it has not been to add to the number of light and entertaining miscellanies, which profess to combine, *incidentally*, some degree of instruction, with mere amusement, or which, at best, propose to promote Christianity, by a species of pious small talk and religious affectation. Believers in revelation, but entertaining what, in the present times, are *peculiar* views with regard both to its doctrines and to the discipline of “*the church of God*”—we have felt it as a matter of religious duty that we should, in addition to our public teaching, communicate to the world, by means of the press, what appeared to us important and valuable truths. To this end, too, we were frequently and pressingly invited by others. We have written therefore, and published under the persuasion, that there were minds to which serious, and even laborious, inquiries into important doctrines and enlightened principles, would prove interesting and acceptable.

With regard to the *contents* of the present volume; in the course of a *Review of the Religious*, and of the *Political World*, and incidentally in an essay on *Religious Persecution*, and other articles, we have found occasion to notice the present state of the system falsely called Christian, both in foreign states and in our own country. In the former, we have remarked the increasing domination of superstition, priestcraft, and spiritual tyranny. In our own country we have noticed the character, the principles, and the ritual of the *establishment* on the one hand, and the pretensions, the encroachments, and the general proceedings of the *dissenting* parties, on the other. The *Unitarian* body has, in the course of two articles, called for our particular remark, chiefly in connection with a charge brought against their teachers and leaders—that of shrinking from inquiry into certain of their doctrines and practices, which we have publicly contended to be anti-christian. An incidental notice of the well known Mrs. Fry and her associates, and of their public interference with the discipline of our prisons, with the more than common degree of public attention which has been directed to the article, have led to an essay on the leading principles of the Quaker body; and the whole subject of modern, as compared with primitive, Quakerism, will probably form a prominent feature in our succeeding volume. In the course of all these inquiries, and in various points of view, the conduct and character of the *clergy*—catholic, established, and dissenting, have presented themselves before our readers; believing, as

PREFACE.

we do, the very existence of such a body of men at variance with the principles of the scriptures; so we confess that, in practice, we have not found them distinguished by any peculiar degree of enlightenment or honesty, of purity or disinterestedness.

The matters of doctrine and practice which have, separately, fallen under our review, have chiefly been—First, the practice of *social or joint prayer*. In abstaining from this practice, and in enjoining, as the privilege of the christian, the individual prayer of the closet only, we, as a religious body, stand single and alone. Anxious to state the grounds of this singularity of conduct, we, in this series of essays, are employed in shewing, that joint or social prayer is at once irrational and unscriptural. Secondly, The belief in the *immortality of the soul*; this subject has been examined historically and argumentatively, as well as with a view to the scriptures. Thirdly, *the fall of man*, as supposed to be taught in the early part of the book of Genesis. And, Fourthly, the observance of *fasts, festivals, and sabbaths*, as held both by the establishment and by dissenters. These inquiries yet remain to be completed; but, as far as they have gone, it has been our endeavour to try the doctrines and practices in question, by the strict tests of reason and of scripture. An article entitled, *Dissenters' Marriages*, has contained a review of the law and practice on this subject; and of the efforts made, chiefly by our own body, to obtain legal redress;—an article, which, we are given to understand, is likely to excite legal attention.

In illustration of our own peculiar views and practices, deduced from the scriptures, as to the organization and discipline of *the church, or family of God*, we have given *four* extracts or documents; one, professing to be an account of our body, by Mr. J. Nightingale;—two, being portions of reports relative to our proceedings as a religious body; and the fourth, an extract from a private letter on the formation and discipline of religious character. The above, with various other articles on moral, religious, or literary subjects; some few striking quotations, and a small portion of original poetry, (all, however, directed to the important end before adverted to) will be found to describe, generally, the contents of the present volume.

Our *success* in the sale of this work, and the degree of public attention which has been directed towards it, have far exceeded our previous expectation; convincing us that, so long as the continuance of the undertaking may be consistent with our own convenience and our views of duty, (for profit, in a pecuniary point of view, we put wholly out of the question) we shall not find any difficulty in meeting with readers who will prize a work laying claim to no other qualifications, than the search after enlightened principles, the prosecution of fearless inquiry, and the inculcation of scripture truth.

THE
FREETHINKING
CHRISTIANS'
QUARTERLY REGISTER.

ON RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.—ESSAY I.

“What is man?

Where must he find his Maker? with what rites

Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?

Or does he sit regardless of his works?

—’Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts.”—*Cowper’s Task, Book II.*

IF RELIGION be to man of all matters the most important, there cannot be a more useful or a more interesting inquiry than that concerning the correct mode of *religious worship*. An endeavour to ascertain this by the aids of reason and of scripture; and, at the same time, to correct the mistakes, remove the prejudices, and expose the abuses which have prevailed upon this matter, are the chief objects proposed in this and the succeeding Essays.

WORSHIP has been defined as signifying “*reverence; homage, adoration, in whatever way expressed; having a civil as well as a religious application, it is used to denote the honour rendered either to man or his creator.*”

“*Lord, I believe!*” was the exclamation of a blind man restored to sight by Jesus; and it is added immediately, that “*he worshipped,*”* that is, paid respect or shewed reverence to him. The children of Israel, in the presence of David, “*bowed down their heads and worshipped*” both “*the Lord and the king.*”† In our own country and language the husband, in the course of the marriage ceremony, is made to *worship*, that is, to express respect towards his intended wife;

* John ix. 38.

† 1 Chron. xxix. 20.

whilst every magistrate and country squire, however undeservedly, is approached in the language of homage, and hailed as *worshipful*!

Worship being the *generic* term, prayer has been correctly described as a *specific mode* of religious homage; as one, amid the various ways which may be adopted by man to express his feelings towards, and to mark his reverence for, his great creator. Prayer is sometimes, in a loose sense, taken as including adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and petition; strictly and properly speaking, however, it means *the latter only*; and in *that* sense, except in cases where the contrary is explained, the word will be used throughout the following inquiries. The *prayer* of a petition is that essential part of it in which the request intended is actually made. To ask; to request with earnestness; to entreat; to implore—these are the ideas usually attached to the word *prayer* when occurring in the common occurrences of life; and there seems no good reason why, when engaged on religious subjects, we should use this, or indeed any word, in a sense different from that which it uniformly bears in other matters, or on other subjects.

PRAYER is by many regarded as a DUTY on the part of every human being; a SERVICE which all owe and should pay to their Maker; a means by which man has it in his power to PLEASE, to MAGNIFY, and to GLORIFY God.

A doctor of the established church has, in this spirit, published a work expressly entitled "*The indispensable DUTY of frequenting the Public Worship of God*;"* and a bishop of the same body (Beveridge, in his "*Great Necessity and Advantage of Public Prayer*") thus expresses himself:—"By praying to and praising—this is properly to *serve* God and glorify him in the world—the great work we were made for, and for which we are still supported and maintained by him;"† adding "that we should assist in public prayers is God's will, and for his glory; and therefore it is our duty, and we are bound to do it."‡ Mr. Thomas Moore, in his recent work in defence of public social prayer, repeatedly speaks of it as a *duty*;§ and it is, consequently, by all these regarded

* By Thomas Tallbot, D.D.—12mo. London, 1765.

† The Great Necessity and Advantage of Public Prayer and frequent Communion, designed to revive Primitive Purity. By the Right Rev. Father in God William Beveridge, Lord Bishop of St. Asaph's.—8vo. London, 1709, p. 47.

‡ Ibid. p. 52.

§ An Inquiry into the Scriptural Authority for Social Worship. By Thomas Moore.—12mo. London, 1821, p. 44 and 109.

as a practice which it is dangerous and reprehensible to neglect or discourage.

A question, however, arises whether these ideas (common as they may be) on the subject of prayer, or religious worship of any kind, are not wholly founded in ignorance and error; whether they do not betray at once false ideas of ourselves, and erroneous impressions of the Deity. *Can man render a service to God?* In all religious exercises is not the benefit to be derived wholly and exclusively his own? Is prayer a duty, a debt which all should pay? Or is it not rather a privilege to be sought for with ardour, and which only a few—those who are worthy and to whom it is benevolently given—can pretend to possess? These are important questions; and it will be necessary, in some degree, to answer these, before we go into the more immediate subject of our inquiry.

Accustomed as we daily are to see the externals of religion—to listen to the forms of worship—and to hear the common use of the name of God, it is with difficulty that we can go back to first principles and see things as they really exist. The Jews, perhaps, acted wisely when they wholly abstained from repeating the hallowed name of *Jehovah*; it is certain that many, who call themselves Christians, act impiously in the frequent and familiar use which they make of the title and attributes of Deity. Let us consider for a moment God and man—the creator and the created: that eternal, omnipotent being who “*lives for ever—preserving and upholding all things by the word of his power*”—with that weak, imperfect, mortal creature whose “*life is a life of trouble,*” whose “*days are as grass,*” and who, when assembled in countless nations, even “*all the inhabitants of the earth,*” is “*reputed as nothing before him and counted less than nothing and vanity.*”^{*} Not for himself, surely, but for our sakes, must God have formed us. Our praise cannot exalt—our worship cannot serve—our fidelity cannot gratify Him; neither can our abstaining from these things degrade, or injure, or hurt Him for a moment. Well was it asked, by one of old, “*Can a man be profitable unto God, or is it gain to Him that thou makest thy ways perfect? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man; but if thou sinnest, what dost thou against Him; or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou against Him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou unto Him, or what receiveth He at thy hands?*”[†] So much for the duty—the “*indispensable*

^{*} Isaiah xl. 17.

[†] Job xxii. 2, 3; xxxv. 6, 7, 8.

“*duty*” of man to serve and glorify God. Poor reptile! that, like an insect in the ground, would seek to magnify the greatness of that being who “*sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers.*”*

In connexion with the error which we have been noticing there exists another, equally common, and, to say the least, equally pernicious in its consequences: namely, an idea that God is by nature the FATHER of the whole human race, and, as a necessary consequence, that *all mankind, indiscriminately*, are entitled to the privilege of being his children, and of publicly praying to him as their common parent. I propose to shew that these ideas are neither founded in reason, nor justifiable from scripture; and first, to try the assertion by the test of reason.

GOD, it is argued, is the *father* because he is the *creator* of all mankind. But between the ideas of parentage and creation there is no necessary connexion. Let us look closely into this matter. A parent is that being who has been the means of bringing another being *of a nature similar to his own* into existence, by which means the species is propagated and continued. God therefore is evidently, in strictness, not the parent of man. That he should be so indeed *because* he is his creator involves this further absurdity—that he must be equally, and for the same reason, the parent of the brute creation—of the whole of animated, perhaps, we may equally say, of inanimate nature; for is he not equally the creator of all these, as of man? This is to disprove the assertion at once, by reducing it to a gross and palpable absurdity.

Some—finding the position untenable, when founded on the *creative* power of God—maintain it on the ground of his providence, and the unlimited benevolence of his nature. “He is,” they argue, “alike the father of all mankind, “because he equally supports all by his power and blesses “all by his beneficence.” The reply here is precisely the same as in the former case. The *reductio ad absurdum* might here be equally employed, by shewing that the benevolence of God extends as well to the brute as to the rational part of the creation; besides which, as before we have seen that there is no necessary connexion between *creation* and parentage, so here we may assert that there is no such necessary connexion between *benevolence* and parentage. To render this more evident let us take an illustration. A rich man, if benevolently disposed, may extend his charity

* Isaiah xl. 22.

to the whole surrounding neighbourhood; but it would be at once absurd and presumptuous were all the objects of his bounty to join in claiming a *right* to his care, and to contend for a natural connexion between them, by proclaiming themselves his sons and daughters. This same individual, indeed, whilst thus benevolent to all, might (particularly if without natural offspring) be induced peculiarly to select one as his adopted child; and to that individual and to *him only* the title of son could in common propriety be applicable. The tendency of this argument is evident. The Deity is this Being, benevolent and merciful to all; to adopt any of his creatures as his children, must be, on his part, an act of choice and condescension. Has he made this choice? Has he thus condescended? An answer to these questions will presently be given when we come to the scriptural part of the subject.

A writer, whom it is impossible to name but with respect, Dr. T. S. Smith, in his admirable "*Illustrations of the Divine Government*," appears to have fallen into the common error which we are now adverting to. In describing the omnipotence of God, he is led to speak of "*the relation which the creator necessarily bears to his creatures*."* On this subject he says "*God is not merely their creator. By the very act of creation he unites himself to them by a tie but feebly represented by that which binds a parent to his child. He is THEIR FATHER in a much more near and real sense than any human parent is the father of his offspring; and the best feelings of earthly parents must be exceeded by his, in the degree in which he is more perfect than they.*"

In reply to this I can only repeat—that if God be the father of his creatures, "*by the very act of creation*," then must he necessarily and equally be the father of *all* the beings he has formed. Not confined to

"Man's imperial race,"

the relationship must equally extend

"To the green myriads of the peopled grass."

But he is their father "*in a much more near and real sense than any human parent is the father of his offspring.*" Here, in fact, lies the fallacy. A father can be *but* a father; how then can any being be such in "*a more near and real sense than a human parent?*" Whether or not the relationship

* Third Edition, p. 27.

be more or less near we need not stop to inquire; all I contend for is, that it is *different*. Even on Dr. Smith's own admission the tie by which the creator is connected with his creatures is "*but feebly represented by that which binds a parent to his child;*" or, in other words, the relationship between God and man, by nature, is *not the same* as that which subsists between a parent and his child—which is the very point for which I am contending.

The obscurity which attends this subject has in a great measure been produced by a confusion of figurative with literal terms. Any man who looks at all closely at the subject must at once perceive, that, *literally*, God is the parent neither of the whole human race, nor of any part it; that he is—and ever was—and ever will be—throughout eternity past and to come—ONE: neither deriving his existence from a parent, nor communicating his powers to any offspring. Man, therefore, either individually or collectively, can only *by the way of figure* be called his child. Now figures of speech, unless closely watched, are delusive things; it being evident that no simile holds good throughout, or indeed it would cease to be a simile and actually become the thing to which it was compared. Under what circumstances is it then that this particular simile is applied? God—who is not by nature the parent of any being—is yet sometimes spoken of as the father of human beings; if not *by nature*, therefore, he must become their parent *by adoption*; and for this two preliminaries are necessary: first, that the Deity should have offered to adopt; and second, that the individuals to whom that offer was made should have accepted the gift and have performed the conditions, if any such were enjoined them. Who then has God adopted? and who are they who have performed the prescribed conditions? to revelation we must again turn for a reply.

In favour of man, however, as possessing superior claims to being regarded as the *son* of God, an exception is still taken on the ground of the great superiority of his mental and rational powers above those of all other created beings with whom we are unacquainted in the present state of things. This argument might well be considered as replied to in the preceding remarks; but, unwilling to leave any thing on this important subject unattended to, I should wish to put the matter in the following point of view, for the consideration of the reader.

The superiority of man to the other portions of animated nature is evident and, of course, allowed; still, as com-

PAIRED WITH DEITY, the question is, whether the difference is not one rather of degree than of kind. Is there one power of the body, or one faculty of the mind, possessed by man, which we do not, in a greater or a less degree, find possessed by some of the lower animals? The same skill is evident in their formation; the same power is exerted to preserve them; the same benevolent care is visible in providing for their pleasure and well-being. *They*, like man, possess a capability of pleasure and pain; like him they are organized beings, who hold existence by the means of a complicated and wonderful machinery; they live like him, and *by nature* they descend with him to a common grave; for, till "*life and immortality were brought to light*" by Jesus, it might with truth and propriety be said that "*that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea! they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence over a beast.*"* Man, in intellect, indeed, was certainly at all times pre-eminent above the brute creation; but he was not *therefore* the child of God, any more than the horse because superior in speed—the dog because remarkable for faithfulness—or the elephant because distinguished by sagacity.

The comparative insignificance of man, when compared with his Maker, has already been adverted to. Man by nature the child of the living God! Look at the human animal in the weakness of infancy—the giddiness of youth—the selfishness of manhood—the feebleness and imbecility of old age: see him in savage life; or observe him degraded by ignorance—blinded by superstition—brutalized by crime! Is man *then* the child of God? But I would not wish to appear as if desirous of drawing an unfavourable picture of the human character. Take man then in the most flattering point of view. Regard him as "*noble in reason; infinite in faculties; in form and moving express and admirable.*" What, after all, is this "*quintessence of dust,*" when he approaches the presence of his Maker? Though "*the beauty of the world,*" what is he but "*the paragon of animals*"—the highest and the most distinguished of the created things of this world? One amongst the multitude of beings that live to shew the power of their Maker—a creature whose mind, indeed, is capable of expansion and improvement; but who, in the absence of revelation and of true knowledge, could

* Eccles. iii. 19.

only presume to reckon himself amongst "*the beasts that perish.*" It was revelation that gave man higher hopes and imparted to him a loftier character. But (whatever may be the *ultimate* destination of things) it was *not* the whole human race, but those who did his will, whom the Deity condescended, by means of that revelation, immediately to adopt as his children. This naturally leads us to the *scriptural* view of the subject, respecting which I think there has been much misrepresentation and exists much misunderstanding.

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP is represented as the duty of all, and mankind are called upon to join in public prayer because (amongst other grounds) it is asserted, that Christianity and the scriptures reveal the Deity as "*the common parent*" of the human race. The scriptures, on the contrary, uniformly describe the Deity as the *creator* of the human race; and as the *father* (and that figuratively and as it were by adoption) of his chosen people only. Let us briefly examine the arguments which are commonly and confidently adduced in support of a contrary opinion.

"*Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?*"* This inquiry of the prophet is quoted by Mr. Moore in proof that God is our "*common parent*"—the common parent of all mankind.† The fact, however, is, that as it is a Jew who speaks, so it is *to the Jews, and to them alone*, that the prophet addresses these question. They were the chosen people—the subjects—the *children* of God, with whom they had entered into an express covenant; their boast was that they had "*one father—even God.*" The prophet is reproaching *them*—not the whole human race, but the Jewish people—that they had "*departed out of the way, causing many to stumble at the law and corrupting the covenant of Levi.*" (v. 8) "*Have not we,*" (that is, the Jewish people) he indignantly asks, "*have not we one father; did not one God create us? Why do ye deal treacherously every one against his brother by profaning the covenant of our fathers?*" This passage therefore wholly fails to support the opinion which it is here brought to establish.

"*Was not*" (continues Mr. Moore‡) "*was not the favourite notion of our great Master, concerning his God and our God, that of the universal parent—his Father and our Father?*" Was it not, I would ask in reply, the disciples, and the disciples

* Malachi ii. 10.

† Inquiry, &c. p. 11.

‡ Ibid.

only, whom Jesus addressed in this language; and can a single instance be adduced in which he connected the sacred name of God with that of father to the whole human race?

But, further than this, Mr. Moore asks "*And was not this*" (that of the father) "*the character in which the apostles, the immediate successors of Jesus in the great work of propagating the gospel, in their discourses and epistles, delighted chiefly to present him to the confidence and veneration of mankind?*" With all due deference I would beg to submit, that, towards the world, this was not the character in which the apostles delighted to represent the Deity. It was to Jesus, "*the beloved son,*" and to such as, listening to his teaching, and that of his messengers, became members of the Christian church—it was to these, and only to these, that the apostles spoke of the great Creator of heaven and earth in the endearing relationship of being their father. It is true, indeed, as argued by Mr. Moore,* "*that the just and liberal dispensations of the gospel*" is "*glad tidings to all people,*" and that "*with God there is no respect of persons;*" but it is equally true that the good news, thus proclaimed to all, was listened to by but few, and that it was not all mankind whom Jesus expected to enter in at "*the straight gate*" of his kingdom. He only that *had ears to hear* was expected to hear; and the apostle John expressly says† that "*as many as received him*" (meaning, of course, those only who did receive him) "*to them gave he the power*" (or, as our marginal reading more correctly renders it "*the right or privilege*") "*to become the sons of God; EVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME.*"

This practice—of transferring the language of scripture to others than the very individuals to whom that language was originally applicable—has been, if not the source of many of the corruptions of Christianity, yet the means by which they have been and are defended and perpetuated. The canon of criticism laid down by Robinson of Cambridge,‡ in this respect, is valuable and important; and one to which in the course of my inquiries on the subject of religious worship I may have frequent occasions to appeal. "*The laws of revelation*" (he says) "*are positive, and are to be obeyed precisely as they are enjoined; those given to individuals by individuals, and nobody else; those given occasionally on those*"

* Inquiry, &c. p. 12.

† John i. 12.

‡ See "*Ecclesiastical Researches.*"

"occasions, and on no other in the world; those given to the Jews by the Jews, and by no other people under heaven; those given for a time, for that period and no other; those given to the apostles by the apostles, who have no successors; and those given to all Christians by all Christians, and for the reason assigned by the lawgiver, and for no other in the world." Had Mr. Moore attended to the spirit of these excellent principles he could not have applied to the whole human race, indiscriminately, passages of scripture which evidently bear an exclusive reference either to the Jewish people or the Christian church.

"Is God the God of the Jews only?" (further inquires the same writer,* repeating the exclamation of an apostle.) "Is he not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes" (he adds, replying to his own question) "of the Gentiles also." But our question with Mr. Moore is—Does Paul call Him the *father* of the Gentiles also? and that he certainly does not. So far from doing this, indeed, the same apostle in another of his letters—writing respecting these same Gentiles—calls, earnestly calls, upon the Corinthian church "not to be unequally yoked together with them;" to have "no fellowship—no concord—no agreement" with them; to "flee their idols and their temples, for they themselves were as the temple of the living God:"—"Wherefore" (he adds) "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and" (then it is added in the way of consequence and *because* they had wholly separated themselves from the world, which is elsewhere described as at "enmity with God") then "I will receive you AND BE A FATHER UNTO YOU and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."† And yet this writer would wish to make it appear that this same apostle described the Deity as the *father* of those very Gentiles, a complete separation from whom Paul himself says he is commissioned by Deity to declare as a pre-requisite and an indispensable qualification for admission to that unequalled honour. This is the dilemma in which Paul is placed by the argument of Mr. Moore; even the most superficial reference, however, to the writings of the apostle would shew that he is not himself guilty of this inconsistency. He represents the Christian church as open indeed to all,

* Inquiry, &c. p. 12.

† See further Mat. vi. 9. Rom. i. 7. Gal. i. 4. Eph. i. 2. 2 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. ii. 16.

whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free; and he argues, that all who enter therein, whatever may have been their birth, or their past condition, become the children of God; but he does *not* destroy his own work by contending that all mankind are by nature, and *without* this condition, already the sons of God.*

All this it may be said partakes of an exclusive spirit; such arguments may be regarded as narrow, bigoted, and illiberal. To these charges I am wholly indifferent; the simple question being, Are they correct? Are they consistent with reason and supported by scripture? I confess I know not how any one who professes to value the principles of Christianity, and who is willing to appeal to the authority of the scriptures, can take any other view than the one here taken. For myself, I am content to be regarded as narrowminded with

* For the authority of names I have myself no great respect; yet it may be worth remarking, for the information of the reader, that one of the ablest of the Unitarian priests stands directly opposed to the views taken by Mr. Moore on the above subject. Mr. Belsham, in the announcement of his New Translation of the Epistles of Paul, takes occasion to give a view of the leading arguments and of the general scope and tenor of the apostle's writings. God, he says, was regarded by the children of Israel as being their creator—redeemer—saviour—father, &c. “*having been promised an inheritance in Canaan they were made,*” he says, “*the sons and children of God.*” The Jews having rejected the Messiah, Christians, he argues, are now “*admitted into the same relation with Deity, which the Israelites once held,*” and the same terms are now used to express *their* state and privileges. “*All,*” he adds, “*who believe in Jesus as the Messiah, and who enter themselves as members of that community of which he is the head, are introduced into the same state of grace and privilege in which Israel formerly stood, and are entitled to the same honourable distinctions. Believers in Christ are acknowledged as the spiritual Israel; the true people of God, his servants, HIS CHILDREN. They are chosen, holy, redeemed, called, and saved: having once been enemies, they are now reconciled: they are new created, new born. God is their creator, their redeemer, their governor, their FATHER: they are ‘translated out of darkness into light’ and ‘from the kingdom of Satan’—a state of idolatry—into that ‘of God’s dear son,’ the Christian community: they are become ‘fellow-citizens with the saints,’ heirs of the promises, and ‘of the household of God.’*”

“All these high and honourable titles are applied to them” (*not in consequence of their nature, but*) “in consequence of their having become members of the Christian community; and do not generally express moral character so much as an external state, a state of privilege and profession, which if they duly improve, they shall obtain the promised blessings.” This statement of the doctrines and arguments of Paul, which Mr. Belsham correctly describes as the theory of both Locke and Taylor, is clear and unanswerable; and compleatly exposes the fallacy of the position that the apostle Paul describes God as being “*the universal parent*”—and man as, *by nature*, his child.

Jesus, bigoted with Paul, and illiberal in common with the enlightened and ennobling principles of Christianity.

In the same spirit with the passages already quoted I find the arguments of another writer, Mr. Robert Wright of Wisbeach—whose *two* works on the general subject of public worship I may also have occasion hereafter to advert to. The error we are speaking of is, indeed, as common a one as it is delusive and pernicious. “*Mankind*,” we are told, not only “*possess one common nature, having many feelings and wants which are common*,” but they also “*stand in one common relation to Deity, are all subjects of his government, are alike dependant on him, and the objects of his paternal care*.”* That is, of course, man *as man*—the whole human race, whatever may be their character or their conduct, and whether obedient or disobedient to the revealed will of God. Now this principle, besides being, as I have already shewn it, in a high degree irrational, is in direct opposition to the plain language and direct import of scripture. The church of God—*THE SONS of God*, as they are called, are always spoken of as opposed to, and, in every possible way, distinguished from the world—from “*the children of this world* ;” that is, mankind at large, the human race in general. “*Behold*,” says the Apostle, “*what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us, that we*” (the members of the Christian church) “*should be called the sons of God; therefore the world*” (that is, mankind in general) “*knoweth us not, because it knew him not*.”† So far from all standing “*in one common relation to Deity*,” the Christian receives this caution, that “*the friendship of the world is enmity with God* ;” and that “*whosoever, therefore, would be the friend of the world is, at enmity with God*.”‡ So far from all the earth being united in one common family, and all peaceably submitting themselves to the paternal care of God, the Christian church was from the beginning, and perhaps for ages to come must continue, in a state of warfare with the world—with its principles—its members—aud its establishments. “*We wrestle not*,” says Paul, (or rather “*we wrestle not merely*”) “*against flesh and blood; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*.”§ Yet these powers—

* An Essay on the Object, Nature, and Design of Religious Worship. By R. Wright. Wisbeach, 1805—p. 21.

† 1 John iii. 1.

‡ James iv. 4.

§ Eph. vi. 12.—See also 1 John ii. 15.—John xv. 19.

thus at enmity with God and godliness—thus opposed to the establishment of his true kingdom, and in open rebellion to his will, stand (upon the hypothesis of Mr. Wright, and according to the commonly received opinion) in precisely the same relation to Deity with the Christian church, and with those who are obedient to his will; the one being equally with the other “*the objects of his paternal care,*” and having equally the privilege to address him in prayer and in religious worship; nay, a writer whom we have already frequently quoted, after contending that God is the father of all mankind, and not of “*a highly favoured few,*” asks, “*Is there not then a reasonableness, a fitness, a propriety, and even a loveliness, which every mind not dead to moral sensibility must recognize, in the offspring of this common parent assembling together to express in unison their grateful sense of obligation to his bounty, their mutual dependance on his universal care and the need which they all have alike of his paternal support and favour?*”*

This naturally brings us again to the point which we are more expressly discussing—the right of all publicly to pray to God, as standing toward him in the relation of children. It is, as we have seen, contended that religious worship in general, and prayer in particular, are natural obligations, anterior to all revelation, imperative alike upon every individual, and which it is not only the *right* of all, but the *duty* of all to fulfil and perform. If, however, there be any force in the above arguments, this is not the case, If God be *not*, indiscriminately, the father of the human race, then is reli-

* Moore's Inquiry, p. 12.—The writer of this work is, I am informed, a Unitarian Preacher, now in the immediate vicinity of London. The book goes considerably in detail into the subject of *social prayer*, and is regarded by the defenders of that practice as an unanswerable argument in its favour. The *Monthly Repository*, of September last, has devoted no less than six pages to extracts, and to an analysis of its contents. Its matter, in some places, they describe as “*curious and interesting;*” its arguments as “*valuable;*” and they “*bespeak the favour of their readers*” to the publication, as one “*entitled to no small portion of praise.*” “*A small work of this kind,*” they observe, “*was much wanted, and they have no hesitation in recommending Mr. Moore's ‘Inquiry’ as a judicious and satisfactory argument for common or joint prayer.*” A work thus announced and recommended may well be taken, therefore, as fairly and fully speaking the sentiments of the Unitarian body; in the course of the following inquiry I shall find frequent occasion to advert to this performance; having risen from an attentive perusal of it with an impression, however specious may be its arguments and apparently strong the weight of its authorities, that I shall be able to shew, to the satisfaction of every candid mind, that it wholly fails in proving the practise in question defensible either from reason or scripture.

gious worship a privilege, not a right; and the offering up of prayer an advantage not a duty. If prayer, instead of being a possession by right of the whole human race, is *a gift by favour only*—then must it be subject to laws, to conditions, and stipulations; it can be possessed only by those to whom it is given, and should be enjoyed in that manner alone in which it has been commanded and authorized.

PRAYER, I have said, or rather the being allowed to pray, with a reasonable hope of its efficaciousness, is a privilege. “*For man,*” (observes Mr. Wright*) “*for man, the child of ignorance and imperfection, who knows not what a day, or a night may bring forth, to be permitted to cast his cause on the Lord must be a privilege.*”—“*Dependent, as he is, on God, for life and every blessing, it must be a great indulgence to him to be allowed, with submission to the divine will, to request whatever favour he may want or desire.*” Another Unitarian preacher, Mr. Gilchrist, (in a sermon on “*the Lord’s Prayer*”†) with equal truth exclaims, “*What a privilege is access to the throne of grace to address the supreme God! As, by revelation, he speaks to us; by prayer, we speak to him. As he approaches us, as his children; we approach him as our father.*”

That a *privilege* should (as contended for by Mr. Moore, Mr. Wright, and others) be possessed by *the whole human race* is an evident solecism in terms. It is clear that a privilege is, that which is enjoyed by a part only; it is equally clear, that it is in the power of Deity alone to *confer* this privilege; and that those kinds of worship only, which he directs, or of which he signifies his approval, can be reasonably regarded as acceptable to him. Now what he approves we can only know by his express appointment; what he disapproves we can only infer from the censures or the silence of his messengers. In the one case, or the other—whether to act or abstain—that alone can be worship or reverence which he has commanded or sanctioned; and that *cannot* be worship, that *cannot* shew reverence—however rational or useful it may appear in our own eyes—which has no authority from his will, and no origin in his instructions.

If the reason of the thing did not make it self-evident, the whole tenor of scripture would be found, at least inferen-

* Essay on Worship, 1805.

† The Pattern of Social Prayer given by Jesus to his Disciples. A sermon preached at Worship Street, before the annual assembly of general Baptists, 1812, by James Gilchrist. See page 7.

tially, to support this position. The language of God to the children of Israel, respecting their worship, was "*Whatsoever I command ye, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*" Again "*ye shall not add unto the word which I command ye, nor diminish from it.*" The ark and the sanctuary; the tabernacle and the temple; the house of God, and the worship by which it was sanctified, were equally and alike framed according to the express directions of Deity. It was the praise of David, in his early days—"Behold I have found the son of Jesse, a man to my mind, who will perform all my will." It was the language of Jesus "*I do nothing of myself, but as my father hath instructed me I speak.*" "*THY WILL be done on earth as it is in heaven*" was one of the petitions which Jesus taught his disciples to put up to their heavenly father; and he was with them forty days explaining and revealing to them the things "*pertaining unto his kingdom*;"—a labour which would have been superfluous if those who were not its subjects previously possessed by nature equal privileges; and if every man was to be left in that kingdom to decide by his own views of right and expediency what modes of worship would be acceptable, and what kind of reverence should be paid to its king.*

If it be censurable to neglect the worship of God in the way which he has sanctioned, it becomes criminal to pursue that worship in a manner expressly opposed to his commands: The sin of the sons of Aaron, who were suddenly destroyed from the earth, was—that they "*offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not*;" and the denunciation of Jesus, directed against the traditions and the ceremonies of the Pharisees, was this—that "*every plant which his heavenly father had not planted should be rooted up.*"† What then—adopting the figurative phraseology of the scriptures—what is the fire which he has really commanded? What are the plants which he has actually planted? Or, in plain language, what is the worship acceptable to him? What the modes of shewing him reverence, respect, and gratitude; which, whilst they are reasonable in themselves, and useful in their exercise, have the sanction of his will and the encouraging seal of his permission?

* See Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32. Heb. viii. 5. Exod. xxv. 40. Acts xiii. 22. John viii. 28. Mat. vi. 9.

† Lev. x. 1. Mat. xv. 13.

With a view to the answering these important questions, I propose, in the first place, taking a rapid and comprehensive survey of the several forms of genuine worship, which, on the one hand, have in various ages existed in the world, by the express permission or command of Deity, as recorded in the scriptures; and, on the other, of those false and pernicious principles and practices which have prevailed and do prevail on this subject, without the authority of, or in opposition to, the revealed will of God—principles and practices which have had their origin either in the ignorance and indolence of mankind, or in the interestedness and ambition of their priests and rulers. This historical survey, if it may be so called, will form the subject of a second Essay; and in the course of it, for future inquiry, a difficult and most important question will necessarily arise: namely, Whether a practice, in our own days almost universal, and which for ages past has been prevalent amongst the nations calling themselves Christian—the *practice of praying socially and in public; at stated seasons and by the means and mediation of a priest*—whether this practice be or be not founded in reason, sanctioned by the authority of Jesus, and justified by the revealed will of God as established by the apostles in the first Christian churches? Much has been said in favour of this practice, and little hitherto in its dispraise; it carries with it, indeed, “*the sanction of ages*,” but “*the sanction of ages*” has, ere now, been bestowed upon ignorance, error, and imposture; and, in the present instance, it is pleaded in favour of a practice, which, after all that its advocates have said in its support, I cannot but think as absurd in itself, and as pernicious in its moral consequences, as it is void of foundation in the scriptures. and indefensible from the principles of revelation. By reason and by scripture, indeed, and not upon mere authority, this practice, at last, like every other religious institution, must stand or fall; by these tests it is my wish and intention to try the practice. Its best friend, if but sincere and honest, could wish it no better trial. Of this and of every Christian institution I would say, indeed, what was once well said of Christianity itself: “*If this counsel, or this work, be of men it will come to nought: but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God.*”

J. D.

EXTRACT FROM A CHURCH REPORT.

THE Christian, commonly called the Freethinking Christian, church, having, at this time, branches existing in London, and in other parts of England, are in the practice, half-yearly, of mutually exchanging REPORTS of their proceedings; these, so far as they contain statements of their internal regulations and discipline, can be little, if at all, interesting to any but the members of their own body; but they also necessarily contain moral remarks and exhortations, which, as being connected with important principles of action, may be considered as more generally interesting. The following extract from one of the most recent of these Reports, addressed from the London to the country branches of the church, may further serve to give an idea of the practical views of Christianity entertained by the body. The diffusion and establishment of moral principles like those taught by Jesus and his apostles, and their introduction into the lives and characters of its members being, indeed, as they conceive, the chief end and object of the establishment of the Christian church.

—“ADDRESSING ourselves, in conclusion, to our friends collectively, we seize the occasion once and again to remind them of the value, and (with the love and earnestness of brethren) to exhort them to the duty of *applying* our exalted and enlightened principles. It is not enough to profess these. It will be to our shame and to our misery *merely* to profess them. The false props of fanaticism itself are not more dangerous, or more fatal, than that ‘strong delusion’ which leads a man to repose upon correct theoretical principles, without their being implanted in his heart, and without his bringing forth their fruits in his conduct. Let us, my friends, endeavour by all means to gain those glorious ends. Let us shew forth, by our lives and our conversation, the real value of our calumniated but noble principles. Putting off the ‘old man,’ with all the pursuits, and all the prejudices which mark the worldly character, let us, in the truly scripture sense, be ‘born again’ to virtue, principle, and knowledge. Let us not stop coldly to calculate how little of principle will suffice, or how much of worldly habits we can with safety retain; but remember that to our weak and imperfect nature there is no safety but in humility, in

vigilance, in constancy, and in a persevering aim at even the highest degree of perfection. Let us not by a blind, hypocritical, and lying candour (or affectation of candour rather) give weak or bad men, should they introduce themselves amongst us, the advantage; thereby neutralizing the otherwise powerful efforts of the virtuous and strong minded; but let us (in love and benevolence indeed, but still in truth) speak of men and of principles as they deserve, and as we really think them. Let us rebuke those whom we think to blame, with sincerity—and bestow our approbation, where deserved, with cheerfulness; acting neither as men-pleasers, nor as seeking merely our own repose and quietness, but as answerable to our heavenly Father for the talents given to our care—and as servants who *know* the will of their Master, and are therefore tenfold more deserving of punishment, should they neglect its performance.

“In this spirit, friends, let us act, each, individually—with benevolence to others, for blessings have freely and bountifully been given to us—with prudence before the world, for the eyes of the evil are fixed upon us; intent to discover and to magnify our failings, in order to traduce our principles—with activity in the business and duties of life, for so we shall best shew ourselves the disciples of our beloved Master—with minds zealously affected towards the rights of the church of God, and devoted to the extending its benignant influence upon mankind—with faithfulness in giving, and humility in receiving reproof; not regarding him as an enemy who honestly, and in a Christian spirit, rebukes us, but, on the contrary, cherishing him as the best and most valuable of friends—with brotherly kindness towards each other, wherever it may be possible, promoting each other's welfare; and, above all, with true piety and fervent, unaffected devotion, remembering the blessings which, above all others, we enjoy—encouraging the prayer of the heart and the closet—drawing from the scriptures the principles which should actuate the Christian's conduct—striving to imitate the great excellencies of our Master Jesus, and his apostles—dwelling on the character and the attributes of that infinite and all-powerful Being who formed us by his will, and who supports us by his providence—cherishing within us the pure, but subtle flame of gratitude and thankfulness—and duly preparing ourselves for that hour of death, and that day of judgment which is, to all human beings, the close of their earthly pursuits, and which opens to the Christian the hopes of eternal happiness in a state of things, where the wicked

shall cease from troubling, and where each shall be judged according to his works done in the flesh, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil."

Signed on behalf of the whole by the Elder.

LONDON, July 1822.

THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD OPPOSED TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

To establish the positions that the resurrection from the dead is peculiarly the doctrine of the gospel; and an immaterial, self-existent principle in man, called a soul, is the offspring of heathenism and infidelity, is the object of the present and succeeding Essays: a design which may be esteemed bold—perhaps irreligious—but certainly second to few in interest to mankind, and in an especial degree important to the believer in revelation.

I approach the subject, therefore, anxious to do justice to the truly philosophical and Christian system of the oneness—the *materiality* of man: in opposition to the *unphilosophical* and heathen hypothesis that man is composed of *two* principles, which possess no qualities in common: the one material and incapable of thought, or even of life, the other immaterial and naturally immortal.

I propose examining this subject under five divisions:—

First, The history of the doctrine of an immortal soul; from which it will appear that this popular and falsely-called Christian doctrine arose naturally out of the speculations, at once of the savage and the philosopher, when unaided by divine assistance, and that it is entirely unknown to Christianity.

Secondly, To prove that the immortal soul of the modern immaterialist is a substance or a shadow of no settled qualities; that these persons support a system not merely differing from their heathen model, but that the "immortal soul," as explained and defined by each separate advocate, differs from that which is described by all the others.

Thirdly, That the existence of two, or more, separate and distinct principles in man is inconsistent with our experience

of nature, and with philosophy—and that it is destructive of the grounds of hope *peculiar* to the Christian, of a future state of existence.

Fourthly, That the portions of scripture, supposed to favour the belief in an immortal soul, are misconstrued.

Fifthly and finally, That the scriptures place the promises of a future life, not upon the existence of an immaterial soul, which never dies, but upon *the resurrection of man from the dead*, and that by an express interposition of the mighty power of God.

In discussing these positions, it may be useful to bear in mind the well known principles of philosophical discussion laid down by Newton:—*Firstly*, That we should admit no more causes than are sufficient to explain appearances; and *secondly*, That to similar effects, we should, as far as possible, assign similar causes. These principles, valuable in all inquiries, are doubly important in a discussion like the present, which has been rendered obscure by ancient prejudice, subtle reasoning, and false philosophy,

In committing myself to the support of the above five positions, it will be seen that I, in fact, unite what the Christian so called, and the modern Deist, will join in esteeming as contradictory—a belief in a future state of existence and a *dis*-belief in an immortal soul; and I may say that it is *because* I am a believer in a future state of existence, and that upon the express authority of the New Testament, that I oppose the doctrine of an immortal soul. The liability of being misunderstood upon a doctrine so very important, originates in the gross degree of ignorance which prevails in relation to the scripture doctrine of a resurrection; an ignorance too not likely to be remedied, for even the Wesleyan preacher, Dr. Adam Clark, complains, that, though “there is not a doctrine in the gospel on which more stress is laid, there is not a doctrine, in the present system of preaching, which is treated with more neglect.”

This neglect, not more characteristic of the doctor's own sect than of other bodies of professing Christians, is the more singular from the circumstances which have recently brought this subject before the law authorities of the country; for, had these reverend and pious persons felt as they ought to have done, upon a question affecting the foundation of their faith, they would not have been content to leave their cause solely in the hands of the Christian Advocate of Cambridge, who, by virtue of his office, and

"of the will of the late Rev. John Hulse, is required to produce, every year, an answer to the objections which may be brought against natural or revealed religion."

This reverend person, who is also the vicar of Kensington, chooses to commit the popular error of confounding the materialist, not merely with the deistical, but also with the atheistical unbeliever. Having been induced to notice "medical publications upon organization and life, which strike deep at the root of all religion," he states, that in his estimation an "immortal soul" is the first, "the noblest gift of God to man;" that atheism and materialism are synonymous—and that "sceptical notions and atheistical views," characterize the materialists. So conversant is this "Advocate" with the secrets of nature, and the precise qualities of matter, that he deems it a sufficient answer to Mr. Lawrence, upon that subject, to assert oracularly "we deny the assertion that "medullary matter thinks."

These sceptical views, Mr. Rennell, the "Christian Advocate," "has been lately informed," upon the best authorities, "have, upon the minds of many, had a considerable effect." Mr. Abernethy too, with equal zeal for the souls of the medical profession, kindly warns them to beware of this modern pestilence; and Mr. Wetherell aided by the Lord Chancellor, contended that the materialism of the soul had been asserted for the purpose of denying a future state. "That it was as easy to shew the evil tendency of this opinion, as the sun at noon day. That the plaintiff" (Mr. Lawrence) "could have no copyright in the work, as it was a public denial of Christianity and Revelation—was contrary to public policy and morality; which had been demonstrated by the Edinburgh Medical Reveiw, the Quarterly Review, the Vicar of Kensington, and others." "That materialism openly and necessarily taught death to be an eternal sleep, and that, therefore, hereafter we were not to be accountable for the deeds done in this life." These reverend and learned adversaries of materialism ought, in justice to the argument, to have preceded their catalogue of effects by philosophical and Christian demonstration; they should have shewn, in the first instance, that the fact can be proved from nature, that man is composed of two principles, the one necessarily mortal, the other essentially immortal; they should have proved, from the mouths of Jesus and his apostles, that the denial of an immaterial, immortal soul was equivalent to the disbelief of Christianity, and then their warnings and

lamentations might have been appropriately promulgated ; though even then, from their own reverence for precedent and authority, they would have been pressed with the difficulty of accounting for the moderate and almost favourable views entertained of materialism, by some eminent members of the established church. Paley, in his *Natural Theology* says, " That grand point—the resurrection of the human dead—might appear hopeless, did we not see the power at work adequate to the effect ; but I admit it is first necessary to be persuaded that there is a God to do so. This being settled, there seems to be nothing in this process which need to shock our belief. They who have taken up the opinion, that the acts of the human mind depend upon *organization*, are supposed to find a greater difficulty than others do, in admitting a transition by death, to a new state of sentient existence, because the old organization is apparently dissolved. But I do not see that any impracticability need be apprehended even by these."

The late Dr. Taylor, in his correspondence with Bishop Law, freely asserts " No man can prove from scripture, that the human soul is a principle which lives, and acts, and thinks, independent of the body." Upon the situation of man, after death, " revelation alone can give an answer to this point ; for whatever the metaphysical nature, essence, or substance of the soul be, which is altogether unknown to us, all arguments, for the natural immortality of the soul, taken from the nature of its substance or essence, are manifestly vain ; we can never prove that the soul of man is of such a nature that it can and must exist and live, think and act, separate from, and independent of, the body ; all our present experience shews the contrary ; the operation of the mind depends constantly and invariably upon the state of the body—of the brain in particular." And the late Bishop of Carlisle asserts, that upon a perusal of the scripture, " by which we protestants profess to be determined, we may possibly discern that the *natural immortality of the human mind* is **NEITHER NECESSARILY CONNECTED WITH, NOR TO A CHRISTIAN ANY PROPER PROOF OF, A FUTURE STATE OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.**"

Had the religious, pious, and doubting Chancellor been familiar with these high authorities in the English church, he might have recognized the right of literary property, even in a treatise on materialism, and have lent a less favourable ear to the force of Mr. Wetherell's testimony ; especially to that portion of it adduced from the work of

Mr. Rennell, who, in a spirit hardly befitting a "*Christian Advocate*," and apparently little conversant with the writings of the most eminent men in his own church, denounces the believer in materialism as an Atheist; a convert of the "French Encyclopediaists;" a supporter of the "German Illuminati;" an admirer of the system of Gall and Spurzheim, "that masterpiece of empiricism;" and who performs the illogical—the daring—the almost sacrilegious act of committing the argument for the existence of a God, upon a belief of a spiritual essence in man. "Atheism and materialism go hand in hand; for when we have argued ourselves out of the existence of our soul, which is a spirit, by the very same process, we argue ourselves out of the existence of the Almighty, who is a spirit also."

The above conclusion of the "*Christian Advocate*," with the equally novel *Christian* argument of Mr. Abernethy, who adopts a singular mode of defending the Christian doctrine of future immortality, by glorying "that he entertains the *same* opinions as Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, and a host of others," together with Mr. Lawrence's supposed concession also to the Christian believer in a future state, that the doctrine of the soul's immortality, as taught in the Bible, is "a sublime doctrine, and has existed in all places, and all ages, and appertains to all religions;" these several writers, each of them the representative of a class, when opposed upon the philosophical arguments relative to the nature of man's intellectual powers and future hopes, seem, in an equal degree, profoundly and singularly ignorant of the *kind of evidence*, upon which the scripture doctrine of a future life rests—a doctrine depending neither upon the ignorant ground of hope of Mr. Abernethy, nor upon the misconception of Mr. Lawrence, but upon the resurrection of a man like ourselves from the dead, and the consequent assurance that the creator of man will again call into existence beings who had had life before—who had died (entire and not in part)—and who can only live again by the exercise of God's almighty power, and who will then, standing before the judgment seat of Christ, be judged according to the deeds done in this life. This is the doctrine of the New Testament—this is the gospel which Jesus proclaimed—this is the philosophy which he and his apostles were commanded by Deity to teach—a gospel, it will be seen, radically opposed to the assumed natural immortality of the mental powers; for were they, by nature, immortal they could not die—and where there has been no death there can be no resurrection from the dead.

This being the foundation of the Christian's hope, grounded on the promises of God, and confirmed by the resurrection of Jesus—of the man himself, and not of his immortal and immaterial soul—from the grave, the Christian is ignorant of the scheme which represents his percipient and active parts in one place, and his body in another; he is incapable of perceiving that the arguments in support of a resurrection, can be aided by a system not adduced as a part of the *same* thing, but an essentially distinct hypothesis; he can find little difficulty in tracing some of the most serious corruptions to which Christianity has been subject, to the source of Mr. Abernethy's cause of glorying—the embodying the system of “Plato, Pythagoras, Socrates, and a host of “others,” with the sublime, yet simple, doctrine of a future state of righteous retribution, through the means of a resurrection from the dead. He can discover, in the corruptions of Christianity, an adequate cause for this unphilosophical and unholy union; and he can, with Dr. Priestly, assert that, “as a Christian and a protestant, he is an enemy to the “doctrine of a separate soul, and that one who disbelieves “that doctrine cannot be a papist. Almost every thing which “has been represented as absurd and mischevious in the “faith of Christians, and what has been the cause or pretence of a great part of the infidelity of the philosophical “world, must be laid to the door of this one article; it is “evident, therefore, that the Christian has no reason to be “biassed in favour of the doctrine of a soul, and may, “without concern, leave it to philosophical discussion;” and finally, the Christian knows that his religion distinctly informs him of a future life—that the scriptures put him in possession of the most important truths which man can know; but they no more teach him metaphysics than they do astronomy or medicine; they, in despite of the “Christian “Advocate's” anathemas, and Mr. Abernethy's “glorying,” no more compel him to believe that his living and thinking powers are immaterial, than they do that the earth is the centre of our system. History too informs him that there once were churchmen, and judges, and “advocates,” and “Christian Advocates” who contended, “That to maintain the sun to be immovable, and without local motion “in the centre of the world, is an absurd proposition—“false in philosophy—heretical in religion—and contrary “to the testimony of scripture;” he can, therefore, feel that he may differ from all such personages, and yet agree with Jesus and with Paul.

Having thus shewn some of the inconsistencies into which certain of the advocates of this doctrine, in the present day, have fallen, I shall now proceed, according to the arrangement before laid down, to the first division of my subject—THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF AN IMMORTAL SOUL.

The belief of an immortal principle in man stands connected, under some modes of explanation, with all nations, at all periods of history, and under every state of society; forming an important part of all systems of theology, except, as Mr. Lawrence states, the Jewish, and he ought to have added the Christian. But as he, in common with his opponents; has not done this, but places the Christian doctrine of a future life upon the same ground as the Platonic or of Egyptian, it will be my peculiar object to demonstrate the fallacy of their assertions; and to prove, in the first place, that the future state of the Christian is as inconsistent with, and opposed to, Mr. Lawrence's "sublime doctrine of "all ages," as his able Lectures are to the puny production of Mr. Abernethy; and, in the second, to demonstrate the vital injury which Christianity has sustained from the attempt to incorporate its truths with the heathen schemes of futurity. These latter naturally enough originated in the speculative powers of the human mind, when engaged upon the inequality of human conditions and the gloomy contemplation of an extinction of being: as death was seen to terminate our bodily existence, it was a natural step to set about devising the means by which it might be possible that man should survive this event; experience demonstrated that our bodies, when dead, were resolved into dust, and incapable, as it appeared, of reanimation, yet notwithstanding this inevitable inference, the case was, fortunately, not hopeless; for since the existence of shadows presented the symbol of a form without a body, and yet exhibited the form of the body from which it sprung; it was not, perhaps, difficult to conceive some yet finer and more subtle composition, in which might consist that life to which men clung even in death. Thus these immature efforts, aided by the speculations of what was called philosophy, were nurtured by the learned—venerated by the vulgar; and, being suited to the quackery of the schools, and the selfish interest of the priests, they became venerable from age, and formidable in authority—from Plato to Aquinas, from Descartes downward even to Abernethy and the "Christian Advocate;" but history has ever shewn us that speculation upon man's future hopes and condition,

however venerable from antiquity or imposing from authority, have, when not derived from the Christian revelation, been wild, extravagant, and generally immoral—giving a sanction to practices which debase our nature, and sink men to a low degree of ignorance and depravity.

The Indians, the Chaldeans, and the Egyptians—but more generally the latter—are supposed to have originated, not, as will be shewn, the immaterial soul as defined in modern times, but that to which this hypothesis is mainly indebted. The Greek historians say “that the Egyptians were the first “who maintained that the soul of man is immortal; that “when the body dies it enters into that of some other “animal; and that when it has transmigrated through all “terrestrial, marine, and flying animals, it returns to the “body of a man again.” The funeral rites of the Egyptians are supposed to have aided their speculation, as they embalmed their dead bodies, which they deposited in subterranean grottos, where they were supposed to live thousands of years. The Persians, according to the oracles of Zoroaster, believed that all souls were produced from one fire, and therefore partook of the nature of the element from which they sprung. The Chinese consider the soul to be air—to be material, but highly rarified.

The Stoics taught the soul to be a hot fiery blast. Other sects of heathen philosophers a hot complexion. Others the harmony of the four elements. Democritus contended that the soul was made up of round atoms, incorporated by air and fire. Some believed that the soul was aerial—some that it was earthy. Zenophon held that it was both watery and earthy. According to some of the eminent men among the Greeks, the soul of the universe was a vapour, or exhalation from the moist elements; so the souls from animals were vapours from their own bodies. Of those among them who considered the soul incorporeal, some asserted that it was a substance and immortal; whilst others believed that it was neither. Thales taught that it was always in motion, and itself the origin of that motion. Pythagoras contended that it was a self-moving monad, or number. Plato that it was a substance conceivable only by the understanding, and moving according to harmony and number. Aristotle “that it was the first continual motion “of a body natural, having in it those instrumental parts “wherein was possibility of life.” The Manicheans taught that there is but one universal soul, which is distributed, in portions, to all bodies. Plato believed in the existence

of this universal soul—supposed that all things lived by its influence, but that those only were living creatures that had separate souls: and it was generally held by the Greeks and other heathen nations, that man was composed of *three* parts, his body being derived from the earth—his soul from the moon—his spirit from the sun; and that, after death, each of these returned to its proper origin. Even Pythagoras and Plato, to follow whom Mr. Abernethy, as a Christian, thinks it a great honour, taught, that there were two souls—one of a celestial nature, or the rational soul—the other the material soul, being the seat of the passions, and that *both* these souls were united to the body; whilst Aristotle (another pillar in Mr. Abernethy's creed) taught that there were three souls, all distinct, as to essence and substantiality, yet in one body, viz. a rational, a vegetative, and a sensitive soul—two of which act, before the rational soul is induced into the body; and, after that event has taken place, then those two cease to act at all.

Mr. Stanley, in his *Lives of the Ancient Philosophers*, places souls in the next rank to demons—but under three classes: first, souls separate from matter, called supercelestial intelligences; secondly, souls inseparable from matter; thirdly, rational souls of a middle kind, immaterial, incorporeal, and consequently immortal, having a self-generate and self-animate existence—proceeding from the paternal mind, seated in the moon, and sent down to the earth, either by the reason of the flagging of its wings, or in obedience to the will of the Father. He believes that the soul of man will clasp God to herself; that the paternal mind soweth symbols in the soul, and the soul being a bright fire, by the power of the Father, remaineth immortal, and is mistress of life.

The PRE-EXISTENCE OF SOULS, and their transmigration, form the prominent features in these several hypotheses; although, in relation to the latter, some variety of explanation occurs: some believed in only one species of soul, making it to pass indiscriminately into the bodies of plants and animals; others two kinds, and others as many as there are species of animals. Jamblicus confined his transmigration to those of the same species, contending that every soul had a species of structure exactly suited to its own faculties. Plato divided souls into three classes, and assigned a separate residence to each, placing the first in the belly, the second in the chest, the third in the head. Some considered that the soul, after its separation, remained without a body. Others gave it a body, and sent it to the

clouds—to the stars—to some happier region; and some, to the regions in the bowels of the earth. Most (like our modern immaterialists) taught that the body was a prison; and that, while the soul was placed in it, it was surrounded with darkness, and shut up as in a dungeon; whilst, on the contrary, others held that souls were remarkably anxious to occupy and earthly tenement. According to Virgil and others, only a few souls retained possession of Elysium—the rest returning into mortal bodies, after a thousand years; but, before they revisited the upper region, they were compelled to drink of the waters of Lethe; an oblivion of former impressions being deemed necessary to prevent them repining in their new habitation, from an anticipation of the extent to which their fiery energy and celestial origin were to be again shackled and obscured, when encumbered with bodies that were noxious and vile. Sallust observes, that were it not for these transmigrations, the Deity would be under the necessity of creating a soul for every new body; and that, as in time this number would be infinite, they could not be contained within a finite world. The rational souls, he observes, never migrate into the bodies of irrational animals, but follow those irrational bodies without, as demons who possess or attend men; some imagined, indeed, that the soul, at last, after wearing out a number of bodies, would, in time, wear out itself, and perish for ever. Thus, without attempting to characterize the supreme wisdom, or the pre-eminent folly, of these speculations, it will be apparent that these learned heathens—these gods of Mr. Abernethy's idolatry—these philosophers, to dissent from whom subjects us to the wrath of the "Christian Advocate" in this world, and to eternal damnation in the next—ascribe to the soul hardly one quality in common with each other, proving to demonstration that the Book of Nature, however suited for study, has afforded but indifferent instruction, when not associated with, and directed by, Divine Revelation; the gross absurdities and contradictions which, without exception, characterize the heathen systems, irrefutably proving the necessity of a divine interference to communicate to us man's future destiny. This consideration naturally leads us to the inquiry, Why and how has it occurred, when man was favoured with divine instruction, that these heathen absurdities should, so far from having given way to the light of revelation, become actually incorporated with its truths, and be even now held, by the great body of professing Christians, as necessary to the belief of

its doctrines, and essential to a participation in his hopes? This inquiry will, perhaps, be best answered by a reference to the rational and simple grounds upon which Jesus and the apostles promulgated their doctrine of a future life. This fact they were commissioned to proclaim; and, without philosophizing upon the component parts of our frame, they took man as he was—a thinking and a responsible being, who had been called into existence by the power of God, and who would be raised from a state of death by the same power, thus receiving a continuation of existence. This mode of simplifying our conceptions of futurity was too humble for the philosopher—too enlightened for the priest—and too rational for the credulous multitude—the very fact of a crucified man’s being the founder of such a system was a stumbling block to many; and the resurrection from the dead was held to be the teaching of a strange God, or laughed at by the philosophers of Athens.

There is also reason to infer from the writings of the apostles, that, even during their lives, the leaven of heathenism had evinced its influence; for there were among the Christians to whom they wrote, those who had, by “philosophy and vain deceit, laboured to beguile them with “enticing words of man’s wisdom, to the worshipping of “spirits, and angels, and demons, giving heed to fables, “rather than to godly edifying.”

Speedily after this period a race of men arose, claiming to be the successors of the apostles, who added thousands of professors to the Christian faith, but at the lamentable sacrifice of Christian principles. The Greek philosophers, who become now the disciples of Jesus, succeeded in effecting the unholy union of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection from the dead and a future judgment, with the monstrous heathen absurdity of a self-existent, immaterial, immortal soul—a soul suited to the art and cupidity of the catholic church, which, (in after ages) in addition to the two popular receptacles for souls, (heaven and hell) provided a third, appointing it for the residence of the soul, after the dissolution of the body, as a temporary place of punishment, where some souls were purged by fire, (hence called purgatory;) a penal prison, out of which a soul could not be delivered till after the expiration of a considerable time, or a satisfaction given to the priest for his prayers in its behalf—a tenet purely of heathen origin, and adopted in all its details with most religious punctuality; for, as among the Greeks, it was usual to put a piece of money into the mouths

of the dead, for the purpose of paying Charon, the ferryman, to transport their souls over the Styx to the elysian fields, so the catholics placed a silver coin in the mouths of their dead, to pay St. Peter for opening the gates of heaven to their immortal parts. The heathens taught also that the souls of the deceased wandered about the universe until they arrived at the river Styx, thence to be transferred to the elysian fields; and the catholics imitated their masters by believing that their souls wandered about the earth until they arrived at purgatory; each expected them to be purified by fire from their sins, as a ghost once tainted was required to be purified by brimstone, without which the bodies through which they were designed to migrate, would be of a more degraded character. These operations so suited to an active, but so burthensome to a sluggish soul, have been described by Virgil, as translated by Dryden, in the following lines:—

“What feels the body when the soul expires—
 “By time corrupted and consumed by fires?
 “Nor dies the spirit but new life repeats
 “In other forms—and only changes seats—
 “Then death, so called, is but old matter drest
 “In some new figure and a varied vest.
 “Thus all things are but altered—nothing dies;
 “And here and there the embodied spirit flies,
 “By time, or force, or sickness dispossessed,
 “And lodges where it lights, on man or beast;
 “The immortal soul flies out in empty space,
 “To seek her fortunes in some other place.”

Those leading men in the church, entitled “The Fathers,” borrowing their doctrines from paganism, taught doctrines respecting the soul’s immortality often differing from each other, and all in an equal degree opposed to Christianity. Tertullion’s opinion was, that the soul of Jesus at his death descended to those of the patriarchs—that the soul of Adam came from God—that the breath of God was vapour. The church, in the days of Origen, had not determined, whether the soul was eternal, or created for a certain time; whether it was the cause of life, or was merely confined in the body as a punishment for previous transgressions. Origen himself taught, that all souls had existed from all eternity, and were imprisoned in the body as a punishment for their sins; and, from his days to the present, under some mode of explanation or other, the immateriality and immortality of the mental powers have been most singularly held by all sects of Christians, in common with deistical philosophers

and the ignorant and savage tribes, as the ground of hope upon which to rest future existence.

I now proceed to my second position:—That the immortal soul of the modern immaterialist is a substance or a shadow of no settled qualities; that these persons support a system not merely differing from their heathen model, but that the “immortal soul,” as explained and defined by each separate advocate, differs from that which is described by all the others.

Digby, a writer of the sixteenth century, thus defines the qualities of the soul “That it is able to move and to work without being moved or touched: that it is in no place, and yet not absent from any place; that it is also not in time and not subject to it, for though it does consist with time, and is while time is, it is not in time.”

Dr. Watts taught, that there were two immaterial principles, or souls; one for life, the other for thought and agency.

Lord Bacon, while his reasoning would lead to an adoption of the materiality of man, yet endeavours to draw a distinction between the inspired and the sensitive souls, or, in other words, teaches two souls.

Dr. Hartley falls into a similar absurdity; for he, after ably shewing, by the facts which he adduces, that man must be material, yet, as if alarmed at his discovery, shrinks back upon the heathen hypothesis—asserting, and that too after every phenomenon of life and of thought had been explained and accounted for *without* the agency of any distinct immaterial principle in man, “That man consists of two parts, one of which is that substance, agent, or principle, to which we refer our sensations and voluntary motions;” and that the thinking powers proceed from what he incomprehensibly terms, “the infinitesimal elementary body.”

Dr. Price, the ablest of the immaterialists, states his creed to consist of four parts:—First, “That I am a being or substance, and not a mere configuration of parts.”—Secondly, “That I am one being, and not many.”—Thirdly, “That I am a voluntary agent.”—Fourthly, “That my senses and limbs—my eyes, hands, limbs, &c.—are instruments by which I act, and not myself; or mine, and not me.”

Mr. Locke, in evident inconsistency with the preceding authorities, maintained that our spiritual parts were “capable of motion;” that created “souls are not totally separated from matter, because they are both active and passive, and those beings that are both active and passive partake of both matter and spirit.”

Mr. Rennell, improving upon all philosophers, both ancient and modern, in his zeal for immortality and the suppression of "dangerous errors," dissents from them all by admitting the possible extinction of the soul, and by conferring immortality upon brutes; the sources of life he describes as being composed of three parts, "vegetation" "volition," and "the life of the understanding;" and I had thought immaterialists all agree, that the soul of man is rational, immaterial, and immortal, and that it possesses no qualities in common with the body, or matter. Mr. Rennell, however, although so great an alarmist, and so zealous an advocate for an immortal soul, has made two admissions which would appear broadly to partake of those "dangerous errors" which he is the paid "Christian Advocate," of Cambridge, to refute.

The first is, the allowing brutes, in common with men, to have immortal souls; and the second, what must startle most believers in his doctrine, but is a singular specimen of his logical powers, that the naturally *immortal* soul may become extinct—for "the thinking principle is essentially "indivisible, but if it cannot be decomposed it may perhaps "be *finally extinguished*."

If the first of these positions be true, I would ask this "*Christian Advocate*," Are the sloth and the oyster, in common with man, progressive and morally responsible beings? Was it (according to his religious creed) *their* immortal souls, as well as his own, that the "Son of God" came to deliver from condemnation? Was the immortal soul of his ox or his ass, as well as that of their owner, a part of the divine essence? And is the immortal soul of the ox or the ass to be the companion of the "Advocate" in a future state of existence? And are they each, at the judgment of the great day, to be appointed to their appropriate situation in heaven or in hell?

I would further ask the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Wetherell, with what consistency *they* can hold out Mr. Lawrence's work as subversive of the Christian doctrine of a future life, and destructive of public morals, because he taught "that "man had no more soul than an oyster, or any other fish "or insect," and yet extol the work of Mr. Rennell, which broadly admits the very points in question?

I would further suggest to these learned gentlemen, that as they deem Mr. Lawrence's tenets put his productions out of the pale of literary property—writings which, by the way, if they do not support the resurrection, leave it perfectly untouched—to what class do they assign those of Mr. Rennell;

who, under the semblance of advocating the Christian's best hopes, actually erects a system destructive of the very foundation upon which they rest? A system conferring upon the frog and the flea immortality; and, by a strange perversion in the intellectual powers, a system supporting a self-existent and naturally immortal soul, which cannot be decomposed, yet, with all its "*natural immortality*," may be finally *extinguished*; but, in part, to quote Mr. Rennell (59) "To such paltry sophistry, and such palpable absurdities are men of the highest professional eminence reduced, when they would annihilate"—the noble attribute of reason in man, or supercede the Christian's only ground of future hope—the resurrection from the dead.

In the preceding remarks I have, as much as possible, confined myself to a narration of the rise of the doctrine of an immortal soul—the natural causes of its incorporation with Christianity—and the definitions of its modern supporters; reserving, for a future occasion, the much-controverted points relative to the cause or causes of life, and of the rational powers of the human mind. As this is at once an abstruse and highly important investigation, it is, in an especial manner, necessary that fixed principles should regulate its discussion. I therefore recur to those laid down in the preceding pages, and am bound to assume that the argumentative immaterialist cannot dissent from them; and while I view Mr. Rennell's doctrine as being equally unsupported by reason and opposed to revelation, I am prepared to admit the difficulties which even a materialist must ever find when speculating upon the organization and thinking powers of man: these difficulties, however, press in precisely the same manner, if not in an equal degree, when he contemplates the organization (and the mind too) of the monkey or the elephant; and we may be justly surprised at the philosopher, who, after conceding powers beyond his understanding to the very "*matter*" whose properties he had been decrying, would announce his alarms, his piety, and his orthodoxy, only at a particular modification of this matter, and, with Christian and philosophic humility, state "*We deny that medullary matter thinks*;" and, therefore, with profound wisdom and Christian consistency infuses into the fly and the oyster spiritual essences, and confers upon them lives of immortality. Yet we might ask these "*Advocates*," so impiously bold in limiting the power of omnipotence, and in circumscribing the modifications of matter even when directed by infinite

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skill and contrivance, Where is the point at which the spiritual immortal Being is discovered to be necessary? Is it at the first production of the egg, or at the moment of its departure from the shell? If at the former, I would further ask these same "Advocates," How many "immortal souls" have they destroyed at their breakfast tables, since they were appointed to suppress "dangerous errors?" If at the latter, What gives life to the sluggish, inert, "medullary" matter, previous to the breaking of the shell? And, in regard to man, Where is the spirit rendered indispensable; is it in the sensibility of a nerve—the voluntary movement of a limb—from thence to the exertion of any one faculty of the mind? When and where was this spirit created: Where was its residence before the formation of the body to which it gives life and thought? At what period, and how, did it enter into and animate that body? Does it grow with the body's growth, and strengthen with its strength; or, is it unprogressive in its nature? How is it affected by sleep—by the phenomenon of dreaming—by bodily wounds—by insanity—by swooning? and by what deductions of reason or of philosophy can such "Advocates" explain the union in one being of "two principles, distinct from, and possessed of no property in common with, each other?" If, indeed, they persist in their doctrines they must reverse the principles of Newton, by admitting more causes than are sufficient to explain appearances, and by assigning similar effects to dissimilar causes.

The succeeding Essays will be occupied with a review of the controversy upon matter and spirit; and an explanation of those passages in the scriptures supposed to favour the doctrine of the immaterialist, from the whole of which an endeavour will be made to establish the following conclusions: First, That, seeing the gross absurdities advocated by the most eminent heathens, man required the Divine interference to correct and inform his mind upon the subject of futurity. Secondly, That the doctrine of the immateriality and immortality of the soul is inconsistent with, and destructive of, those hopes peculiar to the gospel. And thirdly, That the scriptures, from the commencement of the Old to the termination of the New Testament, do not support the doctrine of an immortal soul.

PARAPHIRASE.

REV. xiv. 13; ECCLES. v. 8; PS. xxxvii. 1, 2, 35, 37.

A VOICE at the hour of rest, which said,
 "Blessed, if they die in the Lord, are the dead;
 "For their virtuous works are gone before,
 "And sorrow and death shall disturb them no more."

Blessed—for their days were pure and good;
 Blessed in the passions they ruled or subdued;
 In life and in death blessed;—on earth and in heaven;
 Twice blessed in the blessings to others they've given.

Weep *not* that the vile and the wicked are great;
 Like the bay tree in verdure their flourishing state!
 But briefly and quickly their glories pass;—
 They shall fade from the earth like the sun-withered grass.

Weep *not* that the tyrant's arm is strong—
 That his fetters are galling—his rule is long.
 The hour shall come when the tyrant shall see
 There is—who is higher and greater than he.

The pomp and splendour of power and state—
 The furies and passions upon them that wait
 Are wild as the winds—and as empty will leave
 The hand that would grasp at the pleasures they give.

Peaceful his home, though humble, whose life
 Is far from the paths of crime and strife;
 Who, gentle in mien, though in purpose strong,
 Avoids the weak, but abhors the wrong.

His sons shall bless him—his prayers shall rise
 As incense sweet to approving skies;
 The harvest of plenty his barns shall increase,
 His life be joy, and his end be peace.

There, on his bed, when his eyelids close,
 Death shall seem but a calm repose;
 The mourners around shall sorrow—but never
 Weep tears for him, as one lost for ever.

A voice, at that hour of rest, which said,
 "Blessed, when they die in the Lord, are the dead;
 "For their virtuous works are gone before,
 "And sorrow and death shall disturb them no more."

THE FREETHINKING CHRISTIANS' REVIEW OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

"Such things! such men before thee! such an age!"—*Churchill.*

IN these days of outward profession and popular sanctity, when men are encompassing sea and land to make proselytes, we trust that our readers will deem it neither an unnecessary nor unimportant task to *register* and *review* the passing events of the RELIGIOUS WORLD.

Designed as a medium through which to record the progress of religious principles, the proceedings of religious bodies, or the character and conduct of individuals holding important stations in the religious world, it is anticipated that this department of the Work may be found interesting to the Public; whilst the reflections of the rational, the *Freethinking* Christian, on the matters passing in review, will, it is presumed, be of a nature conducive to the interests of religion and truth, and injurious only to those who are hostile to their progress, or who are seeking to render them the instruments of their own ambition, or the means of their own aggrandizement.

The *religious* world may be divided into two great classes, the one professing or believing the Christian revelation; the other unacquainted with that revelation, or denying its authenticity. The latter—pagan superstition or popular infidelity—may sometimes, perhaps, attract our pen, but our account will chiefly be with the former—the *professing world*, as it is technically termed. We shall not, indeed, concern ourselves with the disputes and the differences that have divided the various sects of Christians, so called, but shall remark chiefly on the features and characteristics which

are common to all: protestantism being, in our estimation, but a rank spirit drawn from the bitter lees of papacy; and the more enlightened sects of protestant dissenters but the more sublimated vapours of the same obnoxious spirit!

At no period of history has the state of religion presented matter for more extensive reflection and inquiry than the present; whilst the general features which it exhibits, are strikingly characteristic and peculiar to the times in which we live. The various interests that are engaged, and the amazing efforts that are made in the maintenance and dissemination of the system, passing under the name of Christianity, would, to the partial observer, mark the present as a truly RELIGIOUS AGE. *In the cause of religion*, the public councils of our own state, and of the other great European powers are, at the present time, actively engaged.* *In the cause of religion*, the holy alliance and the army of the faith are trying the arts of diplomacy and of war. *In the cause of religion*, our missionaries are tempting the perils of unknown seas, and enduring the extremes of tropical heat and of polar cold. *In the cause of religion*, the scriptures are translated into every living language; and cargoes of bibles, and freights of divinity are exported to every part of the habitable globe. *In the cause of religion*, the arm of the law is constantly uplift, and the tender mercies of crown lawyers and Christian judges are daily exercised in restoring the backslider, and convincing the gainsayer. These, with our National Schools, and Sunday Schools, our Tract Societies, and Home Missionary Societies, our Societies for the Conversion of Soldiers and Sailors, Watermen and Lightermen, Hackney-coachmen and Convicts, convey, in some imperfect degree, the extent and variety of the operations carried on in the cause of religion.† Religion, indeed, meets us at every corner, accosts us at every turning, and surrounds us in every situation. The temples which the piety of our fathers had raised, are insufficient for the purposes of modern devotion—*New Churches* attract the eye in every division of the Metropolis—*Tent Meetings* arrest the attention of the Sunday pedestrian, and *Floating Chapels* invite the curiosity of the aquatic party: the mechanical arts become subservient to the

* We are writing Nov. 25, 1822.

† See Report of 'Bethel Seaman's Union,' 'Port of London Society,' 'Watermen, Lightermen, and Bargemen's Friend Society and Bethel Union.' For the efforts in favour of Hackney Coachmen and others, see the Report of the last anniversary meeting of the Orange Street Tract Society.

objects of Christian conversion, and religion is *worked by steam!* Religious excursions to Gravesend or the Nore are daily advertised; the steam boats hold out the attraction of being manned by captains, sailors, and cabin-boys, who fear the Lord. Prayers occupy the time usually spent by similar parties in polite intercourse, and sermons take the place of sea-sickness!*

Do we, because religion has become so fashionable a thing, felicitate ourselves on being born in a Christian country? Do we boast with others the triumphs of the Cross? Do we, as friends to Christianity, derive consolation from the contemplation of such a state of things as we have just described? No! on the contrary, we behold, with shame and mortification, the mockery that is hereby made of the Christian religion—the invitation that is held out to question its truth and doubt its authenticity; and, however general may be the profession, however vehement the display of religious belief, we are impressed with the painful conviction that the religion of Jesus was never less known, or less practised, than at the present moment. Outward protestation and inward indifference—pretended zeal, but real selfishness—assumed piety and actual worldly-mindedness, are the characteristics of the age. **HYPOCRISY** is the pregnant evil—the giant vice of our times!! This is not the language of vague declamation, or of dogmatical prejudice; our condemnation of the spirit and principles which actuate the present age, is a necessary consequence, not of our belief in this or that particular doctrine, or opinion, but of our belief in **CHRISTIANITY**. Men may, perhaps, honestly differ about some of the *doctrines* of Christianity, but its **GENIUS**, its **PRINCIPLES**, its **OBJECTS** are, we appre-

* Some idea of the extent of the exertions made by the Religious Public may be formed from the fact that the British and Foreign Bible Society had, up to the date of their last Report, collected in money £.1,800,526, and distributed in Bibles and Testaments 3,563,974 copies; besides which

The disbursements of the Church Missionary

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| Society, for the year 1821, were | - - - | £. 32,896 |
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| The London Missionary Society | - - - - - | 40,000 |
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| The Baptist Missionary Society | - - - - - | 10,600 |
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| The Wesleyan Missionary Society. | - - - - - | 30,925 |
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| The London Association has paid in aid of the | - - - - - | |
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| Mission of the United Brethren | - - - - - | 1,896 |
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Making a total of upwards of one hundred and sixteen thousand pounds, expended last year by the above five Missionary Societies.—This war against Satan is certainly an expensive one; we should be curious to learn the charge of the *commissariat!*

hend, so clearly portrayed in the New Testament, as, with regard to them, to preclude any conscientious variety of opinion. Can any man, or any set of men, affect to doubt that virtue and morality—that sincerity and integrity—that disinterestedness and honesty—that meekness and humility—that union and equality—that forbearance and love—that inward faith and unobtrusive, unpretending devotion are of the very essence of the gospel? And are *these* the qualities which distinguish the Christian profession in the present age? What! when religion is avowedly upheld by the sword—when kings, despotic in their characters, and immoral in their lives, assume, as of right, the Christian name—when priests are the enemies to knowledge, and the open or insidious traitors to the rights and liberties of mankind—when the truths of the gospel are doled out for hire, and godliness converted into gain—when dissension, and hatred, and persecution, prevail amidst religious parties—when the corrupt, the selfish, and the proud, are among the foremost in all public religious proceedings—when, with Christian professors, titles, and rank, and dominion, become the privileges of the few, and ignorance and servility the lot of the many—when devotion and piety are obtruded on the public gaze, whilst their very semblance is wanting in the private intercourse and duties of life, will it be pretended that the religion of Jesus prevails—that the kingdom of God is established upon the earth?

We are not of the number of those who consider that the world grows worse, and that men and principles are in a constant course of retrocession; we are willing to do justice to the moral and intellectual improvement of the age; but if the priest and the people *will* assume the name of *Christian*, it is fitting we should try them by reference to that standard.

There are, no doubt, among the leaders of all parties, men of respectable characters and attainments; and among their respective followers, also, many decent, inoffensive sort of people, with sense sufficient to take care of their own interests, and who, in the private walks of life, preserve the even tenor of their ways, without offending against the laws of the land, or transgressing the commands of the decalogue. But we have been accustomed to contemplate Christianity as a system calculated to raise and dignify the human character—designed to separate men from the world—to purify them from its corruptions—to raise them above its false interests—and to fix their hopes beyond the grave;

for which state the whole discipline of the gospel was designed to prepare them. Let those who are courting the favour of men; whose objects are answered *here*; who, in the present life, have their reward—let them give up the hopes of an *hereafter*—let them renounce the name of CHRISTIAN and our opposition to them is at an end; it is as *Christians* we arraign them—it is as *Christians* we try them—it is the assumption of that honoured name that constitutes the *gravamen* of our charge against them.

But convinced, as we are, that true religion can never prevail until this specious, showy, popular system of outward faith, which blinds men's eyes and satisfies their consciences, is brought into disrepute, it will be our object, in these papers, to detect and to expose the religious hypocrisy of the times—to examine and to analyze the mass of folly and delusion which passes current for Christianity—to bring to light the vile arts which are practised on public credulity—and to trace conduct and principles to their just motives and consistent objects. In the execution of the task we have thus imposed upon ourselves, if our language should be strong, and our reprobation decided, let it not be supposed that we are actuated either by personal feeling or party spirit—we have no selfish objects—"we have no resentment;" but, convinced that an inveterate disease, which preys on the vitals and tugs at the life-strings of the system, is not to be removed by opiates, we venture to apply the most active remedies that our *materia medica* can furnish.

The subjects which will come under observation in these papers will, necessarily, be so various that we have not been enabled to fix upon any plan of arrangement. Our observation, and that, indeed, of the public, has, of late, been chiefly directed to the CHARACTER AND CRIMES OF THE CLERGY; and to this subject, specifically, we propose devoting the remainder of this paper, conceiving that its present importance will justify us in leaving for a future occasion any more general examination and notice of the religious world. It is our intention, also, to confine our strictures to the regular, the established clergy of this and other of the states of Christendom. These stand first in importance: these, from their alliance to worldly power, have the greater means of mischief. We have no attachment, certainly, to priests of any denomination; but a dissenting priesthood is a luxury in which ignorance and fanaticism have a natural right to indulge: an established priesthood is an incumbrance to which all are alike compelled to become contributory.

Turning our attention first then to the south of Europe, the Peninsula may be regarded as the head quarters of priestcraft—as the hot-bed and forcing-frame of fanaticism and superstition.

SPAIN, at the present moment, engages the observation of every friend to humanity; and the ecclesiastics are notoriously the instigators or instruments of those calamities of which that ill-fated country is now the unhappy scene. There is no spectacle at once so truly interesting and so sublime as that of a nation—groaning under oppression, and enchained in superstition and slavery—rising from the dust with a giant's strength, and claiming those common rights and equal laws which are essential to the happiness and well-being of mankind. Spain had placed herself in this noble attitude:—

“Spain” (to use the terms of the report recently addressed by the Spanish Secretary of War to the Cortes) “was advancing majestically in the career of liberty, and was affording a proof, in the tranquillity and content of her inhabitants, of the possibility, in this enlightened age, of passing, without convulsion, from a state of ignorance and despotism to one of knowledge and rational liberty. The Cortes were assembled; abuses were reformed; new institutions were established with so much order and harmony, that Spain was, under this new aspect, the admiration of the universe, as much as she had before been in the arduous undertaking of resisting Buonaparte. Some nations wished to imitate her example; and, in short, the political code of Spain served as a model, and was adopted by several European nations.”

“This glorious circumstance” (continues the reporter) “which affords the best eulogium of our institutions, was *precisely the cause of our present sufferings*. The genius of despotism is alarmed; trembles for the existence of his cherished system; foresees its total ruin; and, deaf to the cries of liberty which surround him, silently and secretly prepares the ruin of those nations which, having made themselves free, will not allow him to interfere in their internal affairs.”

The character and conduct of the clergy, by whose machinations the fair prospects of the Spanish nation have been thus cruelly marred, are sufficiently conspicuous. All the accounts from Spain agree in representing them as the fomentors of disorder—the accursed demons of discord and of strife. Merino and many others of the insurgent chiefs are, in fact, priests. O'Donnel, the general in chief of *the army of the faith*, in Navarre, avows, in a recent address, that religion and the *worldly* interests of religion are the objects for which he fights.

“The Regency” (says he) “commands me to put myself at your head; to direct your tried valour and your efforts towards *the sole end* of all good and loyal Spaniards, which is to replace the religion of our fathers, now debased

and outraged, in all the *splendour* which it once possessed in the midst of a nation so justly celebrated by its catholicism.

The spirit of this religion, which is now to be maintained by the swords of traitors and the devices of priests, is admirably illustrated by reference to one of the "*secret instructions*" given by Eguia, to General Quesada, on his taking command of the army of *the faith*, which instructions are said to have been found among the papers of Quesada, when defeated at Bolea,—Art. 7. "*You will not give quarter to any prisoner taken on the field of battle, even though the enemy should treat theirs with the greatest forbearance possible!!*" From the Madrid papers, of August last, we are furnished with certain honourable testimonies of the part taken by some of the dignified clergy, in the present distressing state of Spain. In Malaga the Bishops Canedo and Valez appear to have acted an insidious and odious part, in fomenting the public distresses and seducing the authorities. But in Algesiras the direful plot, in which the ecclesiastics were engaged, appears to have been exposed to the government, by the defection of one of the political chiefs, who is said to have made known "*the crusade that was in preparation, previous to the month of July, and even sent a pattern of the crosses which were ordered to be made at Gibraltar.*"

"The result" (adds the writer) "has proved in unison with what we have seen every where, in attempts to replunge us into slavery, in the *name of God*. The Bishops of Malaga and Ceuta, practising the scandalous and notorious infraction of human and divine law, have employed themselves in misleading the minds of the inhabitants of the Serrania, who are the victims of the grossest superstition and the lowest ignorance, joined to a ferocity and boldness of character, of which the priests know how to avail themselves to their own advantage. The most miserable inhabitants of the deserts of La Ronda have been excited, *by means of the clergy*, and misled by the idea that those are martyrs, who die for the *temporal* interests of fanaticism."

The compound of cruelty and superstition, of which the character of these defenders of the faith is made up, is well exemplified by the instance recorded in the accounts from Barcelona, of the 2d August, in which some infuriated banditti had entered the house of the Rigidor of Dosrius; and, having dragged the Rigidor and his son into an adjoining wood, impelled by murder, robbery, and religion, they sent for the curate of the parish to *confess them*, as their consciences would not permit them to *shoot any person* until the ceremony of confession was performed!

The addresses of the insurgent chiefs are in the same spirit with these monstrous proceedings. In one of these

compositions, printed at Bayonne, the Navarrese are invoked to this effect:—

“The insults suffered by our holy religion, which is publicly outraged by the arms of the Liberals, excite terror. The procaimers of the most perfidious of men cry ‘down with religion! The devil for ever.’ (Meura la religion! y viva el demonio.)

“The people of Erro and Viscaret deplore the profanation of the churches, and the sacrilegious robbery of the sacred utensils, caused by the Vandals of Spain.

“*The standard of the faith* is unfurled; and the banners of the king are every where displayed. Hasten then to join them; and, bravely fighting for our captive king, Ferdinand, this faction of impious Republicans will instantly vanish, who endeavour to deprive us at once of *eternal felicity*, and of temporal happiness.”

The Navarrese are finally conjured to hazard their lives “in the *cause of God*, of the king, and of the country.” But what says the king, whose name is made the sanction to these transactions? Ferdinand, in his address to the Spanish nation, dated Sept. 16, declares that these proceedings are abhorrent even to his bigoted breast.

“The scenes” (says the king) “which the contests between the sons of the country and their criminal adversaries produce, are too public not to demand my attention—too horrible for me not to denounce them to the acts of the law, and not to excite against them the indignation of all those who are proud of the name of Spaniards. You are witnesses of the excesses which have been committed, and are still committed by that liberticidal faction. It is needless to lay before you the picture which Navarre, Catalonia, and other provinces of this fine country present. Robberies, murders, arson; and brother armed against brother; and father against son have, repeatedly, excited your indignant courage, and caused your generous tears to flow. Embrace in idea all the evils to which *fanaticism* gives birth; and supply from your indignation all the expressions which I want to make you comprehend mine. Ministers of religion! you who announce the word of the living God, and preach his morality and his charity, *tear off the mask* with which the perjured cover themselves. Declare that *the faith of Christ* is not to be defended by crimes; and that it rejects, from the number of its ministers, those who employ fratricidal arms: *annihilate these criminals from the altar*—destroy them with those thunderbolts which the church has placed in your hands;—be good priests as well as good citizens!”

The language of Ferdinand is either sincere, or it is not so. If the former, how odious must be the conduct of the Spanish ecclesiastics to perpetrate, in the name of the king, those crimes which he thus indignantly denounces. If the latter, what an appalling—what a disgusting picture of every thing that is perfidious and hypocritical would this crowned head present!! Who, that entertains such a suspicion, will ever after put their trust in princes? Who will say that the bare idea of the sentiments here sanctified by

the royal lips, being dictated by the policy or circumstances of the moment, does not convey to the agent a title to be regarded as the most finished specimen—the most perfect masterpiece of fraud and of hypocrisy, that even Spanish priestcraft could turn out from its hands?—Compared with this, oh! amiable and much-abused Machiavel, how exemplary was thy “*Prince!*”

Turning our eyes to FRANCE the same spirit appears to animate the national clergy with that of Spain. They have, indeed, a kindred interest in the crimes and the violence that are committed by their reverend brethren in the Peninsula; for, if the reign of darkness and superstition terminate in Spain, light and liberty will necessarily dawn in France. That the clergy of both these nations are alike, not only in their creeds but in their crimes, may be proved by the persecutions, cruelties, and murders committed on the protestants in the south of France, at the restoration of the Bourbons. For a long time it was thought, in this country, that the accounts of these atrocities were exaggerated by party feeling; but the chain of established facts, and official evidence, which Mr. Mark Wilks has laid before the public on this subject, has proved, beyond all doubt, that the people of this country were ignorant of the real extent of the sufferings of their protestant brethren in France.

This work has performed an important service to truth; it has furnished materials for history, by whose imperishable records

“— this foul deed shall smell above the earth!”

And to what end were these barbarities (to which it is unnecessary more particularly to refer) directed? Man is not naturally a savage animal—he becomes so only by the force of education or the hopes of gain. Both these causes operated with the priesthood of France. Nursed in the corruptions of the church of Rome, they were desirous of restoring religion to that state in which it had existed before the revolution; and of re-establishing that spiritual dominion which had contributed so largely to their temporal benefit. Mr. Robinson’s “*Memoirs of the Reformation in France,*” convey a lively picture of that state of religion which it was and is the object of these wretched men to restore.

“*Religion itself* was made to consist in the performance of numerous ceremonies of Pagan, Jewish, and monkish extraction—all of which might be performed without either faith in God, or love to mankind. The church ritual was an address, not to the reason, but to the senses of men; music

stole on the ear, and soothed the passions. Statues, paintings, vestments, and various ornaments beguiled the eye; while the pause which was produced by that sudden attack, which a multitude of objects made on the senses, on entering a spacious decorated edifice, was enthusiastically taken for devotion. Blind obedience was first allowed by courtesy, and then established by law. Public worship was performed in an unknown tongue, and the sacrament was adored as the body and blood of Christ. The credit of the ceremonial produced in the people a notion that the performance of it was the practice of piety, and religion degenerated into gross superstition. Vice, uncontrolled by reason or scripture, retained a Pagan vigour, and committed the most horrid crimes; and superstition atoned for them by building and endowing religious houses, and by bestowing donations on the church. Human merit was introduced; saints were invoked; and the perfections of God were distributed by canonization, among the creatures of the pope. The pillars that supported this edifice were immense riches, arising by imposts from the sins of mankind; idle distinctions between supreme and subordinate adoration; senseless axioms, called the divinity of the schools; preachments of buffoonery, or blasphemy, or both; cruel casuistry, consisting of a body of dangerous and scandalous morality; false miracles and midnight visions; spurious books and relics, oaths, dungeons, inquisitions, and crusades. The whole was denominated THE HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH, and laid to the charge of Jesus Christ!"

Such was the religion of France in the sixteenth century; how far it has been restored in the nineteenth century, the too successful efforts of the French priesthood in re-establishing the monastic orders, and rebuilding the religious houses which time or reason had destroyed, sufficiently attest. A monastic order, in the bosom of a community, is a swarm of drones living on the industry of the hive. Religious houses are sanctuaries for ignorance, and receptacles for crimes. A French paper, the *Journal des Debats*, of the 19th Sept. furnishes us with an account of the re-establishment of the Brotherhood of the Cross at Calvary; the Calvary, we imagine, of St. Valerian, near Paris, famed for its sculptured mysteries.

"The missionaries of France had announced that the procession of the relics of the cross should be followed by the re-establishment of the Brotherhood of the Cross, erected August 30, 1645. The brotherhood was dispersed at the recent epoch, when the hermits of Calvary were torn from their asylum; when the sacred vessels were broken, and the pilgrims massacred; and the sacred place of the cross was converted into a *kiosque* for amusement. On Thursday this spot, restored by the piety of the monarch to its venerable and primitive destination, displayed a religious spectacle of great interest. The archbishop of Arles, surrounded by several bishops, thirty *Curés*, and two hundred ecclesiastics, solemnly officiated. The altar, forty feet high, surrounded by large banks, occupied by the clergy, was entirely covered with garlands of flowers: it rose like a hill, above a multitude of more than 60,000 people, who crowded round it. From 700 to 800 soldiers, many officers, magistrates, and persons in the first ranks of society were present.

"*Le chant des Cantiques* rose first to heaven. M. L'Abbé de Fortin Janson pronounced a moving discourse on the Cross; he then explained, to the numerous auditors, the motives for assembling, and the statutes of the Brotherhood of the Cross.

"The king, at the request of the missionaries, has granted them, said the Abbé, all the ruins, and they have not shrunk from the grand work of again restoring them to splendour—*Dominus providebit*. Faithful worshippers of the Cross—you are come here to accomplish the views of Providence! Seven thousand Christians immediately precipitated themselves at the foot of the Cross, and were inscribed in the brotherhood, amidst cries of "*vive la Croix!*" "*vivent les Bourbons!*" Tears were abundantly shed. The procession commenced, attended by affecting music, and accompanied by pious songs. It passed over a road strewn with flowers; through triumphant arches, prepared by the faithful, as in the days of the primitive church. The *Labanum*, or standard of the Cross, was carried by *veterans*, who, *covered with glory* came to day, to offer sacrifices to the glory of the God of peace. The benediction of the Cross terminated the day. Happy are the days which unite more than 60,000 souls in the same thought—that of doing good.

This is, assuredly, the banquet of fanaticism—the saturnalia of priestcraft. Let us turn to a more moderated picture of clerical imposition, which may, however, affect us the more, being nearer home.

His Majesty's recent visit to SCOTLAND served, in some measure, to develope the present character of religious parties in that country; and to raise a suspicion that, however much the good people north of the Tweed, pride themselves on their unbending independence, their priests have, as in duty bound, a proper share of the obsequious virtues. In the address, from the University of Edinburgh, presented to the king by the professors and rectors, they very truly represent that "intellectual, moral, and religious instruction is the most solid basis of a nation's prosperity, happiness, and honour; which," says the addressers, "*it is the dearest wish of your Majesty's heart, and the most unceasing object of your reign, to extend and perpetuate throughout all your dominions.*" Now, taking it to be so, taking it all as true—literally true—what an object of sympathy does his Majesty appear; *the dearest wish of whose heart and the unceasing object of whose reign*, have been, in the distresses that have pervaded the country, from the first commencement of that reign, *so lamentably disappointed*. It is at any rate, consolatory that, however unhappy his Majesty may have been in this respect, since he has worn his earthly crown, the address prays that he may receive "in heaven an unfading crown." Next in order is the address from the episcopal clergy of Scotland, presented by the bishops, &c. This is unquestionably, a very curious document; and, proceeding from the ancient

supporters of the house of Stuart, it assumes a peculiar and characteristic interest. The episcopal clergy humbly hint their *poverty* to his Majesty; they commend themselves to the royal favour, by asserting that "their principles and forms of worship are the same with the established church of England." They recognize in his Majesty, "the lineal descendant of the royal family of Scotland, and the legitimate possessor of the British throne." And these episcopalians, it appears, are ready, not only to pray, but to fight for his Majesty; "and, with heart and hand, to convince the world that in their breasts a firm attachment to the religion of their fathers is inseparably continued, with unshaken loyalty to their king." And yet, notwithstanding these assurances, it seems that the presbyterians, with their deans and chaplains; suspected there was a certain sediment of the old jacobine tenets and feelings lurking at the bottom of the episcopalian address; and they are represented as having conceived offence at the circumstance of his Majesty remaining at Dalkeith during the preceding sunday. Matters are however, set right by the king's attending the worship of the high kirk of the presbyterians, and listening, as the papers state, "to the simple and primitive service of the Scottish kirk." There is, says the same report, "a permanent THRONE in the high kirk, for the KING'S REPRESENTATIVE, during the sittings of the general assembly, which his Majesty now occupied." This permanent THRONE does not savor much of *simplicity*; this KING'S REPRESENTATIVE is not an officer familiar to our recollection in the *primitive* church: and then, when we are told, that during the reading the introductory psalm, the people stood up in honour of the entrance of his Majesty, with his court, nobles, and officers of state, our mind is insensibly carried back to the earliest era of the Christian church; and we fancy we are hearing an homily from the apostle James, against the sin of paying respect to the rich man, "with a gold ring in godly apparel," who should come into our assembly! (James ii. 1 to 4,)

The report next introduces us to another of the *primitives*—the Very Rev. Dr. Lamont, Moderator, ("be not called of men Rabbi") who, "in his prayer, alluded to the honour of the royal visit," ("the kings of the earth exercise lordship—") We suppress our scripture-quoting propensity, or we may be suspected at once of irreligion and disloyalty; for it is dangerous, in these times, to follow Jesus—even though 'afar off.')

Our reporter concludes his account by an exposition of the impression of the royal mind, in reference to this solemnity, as illustrative of the piety of our northern neighbours; "and if the king had reason to say, that, on account of "their week-day conduct, they were all ladies and gentlemen, "he must have felt, from their conduct on the sabbath, that "they are a *nation of Christians!*" One extract from the address of the ministers and elders of the Scotch kirk to the king, we cannot fail to observe.

"But we cannot express what we feel, when, within the precincts of your ancient kingdom of Scotland we behold your Majesty in person—a King distinguished by every splendid endowment, and graced by every elegant accomplishment—at once the safeguard of our country and the bulwark of our church!!!"

If our readers have not had enough of presbyterianism and episcopacy for further particulars let them refer to Mr. Robinson of Cambridge. "EPISCOPACY has not varied "from the days kings created it. It has always been a "*hireling state of servitude!*"—"Religious tyranny subsists in "various degrees, as all civil tyrannies do. Popery is the "consummation of it, and PRESBYTERIANISM a weak degree "of it; but the latter has in it the essence of the former, "and differs from it only as a *kept mistress differs from a "street-walking prostitute!*"*

In IRELAND the clergy of the established church are, at the present time, manifesting a most active zeal, if not in the cause of religion, at least in that of revenue; and certain of the London clergy appear not behind them in this particular. The continued and increasing distresses of the sister kingdom have, of late, drawn the public attention to a close and scrutinizing examination of the TITHE SYSTEM; which, injurious as it is in all countries, is esteemed particularly so in Ireland, from the mode in which it is collected, by which, among other causes of complaint, it seems that the tenant pays, under the present system, more than the clergyman receives, and the difference is consumed by endless and expensive litigation.

The prodigal and splendid protestant establishment in Ireland, maintained by a catholic population, is a monstrous anomaly in legislation, and a fruitful source of popular jealousy and national discontent. It is calculated, that of a population less than seven millions in Ireland, about one

* Plan of Lectures on the Principles of Non-conformity.—Lectures 6 and 10.

million only are protestants; and of these one half may be computed to be dissenters, leaving about 500,000 to the national church of Ireland; to provide for whose spiritual wants there are twenty-two archbishops and bishops, and upwards of thirteen hundred beneficed clergy. The twenty-two mitred heads divide amongst them upwards of £.180,000 annually, drawn from the labour of a distressed and starving population; and the real rental of the Irish ecclesiastical property has been estimated at one million!*. From the manner in which the tithes are leased out, from the parson to the tithe-proctor, from the tithe-proctor frequently to others, the land becomes, as Mr. Grattan expressed it, "*a prey to a subordination of vultures.*" "It is not alone" (says this gentleman) "the excess of exaction which makes the tithe-farmer a public misfortune—his mode of collecting is another scourge. He puts his charges into one or more notes, payable at a certain time; if not then discharged he serves the countryman with a summons, charging him 6*d.* for the service, and 1*s.* for the summons. He then sometimes puts the whole into a *kerry bond*, or instrument which bears interest; he then either keeps the bond over his head, or issues out execution, and gets the countryman's *body and goods completely into his power!* To such an abuse is this abominable practice carried, that, in some of the southern parts of Ireland, the peasantry are made tributary to the tithe-farmer—draw home his corn, his hay, and his turf; or give their labour, their cows, their horses, at a certain time of the year, for—nothing! These oppressions not only exist, but have acquired a form and distinct appellation—*tributes*:—tributes to extortioners—*TRIBUTES PAID BY THE POOR, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!*"†

A considerable portion of the income of the beneficed clergy is derived from tithes thus levied on the cattle and produce of the poor peasantry—the hapless cotters of Ireland! "I have seen" (says Mr. Wakefield) "the cow—the favourite cow—driven away, accompanied by the sighs, the tears, and the imprecations of a whole family, who were paddling after, through wet and dirt, to take their last, affectionate

* Mr. Wakefield, Dr. Beaufort, Mr. Newenham.

† Grattan's Speeches.—Vol. ii. p. 45.

"farewell of this, their only benefactor, at the pound gate."
 "I have heard, with emotions which I can scarcely describe,
 "deep curses repeated from village to village, as the cause
 "came proceeded." Vol. ii. p. 466.

According to a return made by order of the House of Commons, it appears that, in the single county of Tipperary there were tried, before the quarter sessions, in the year 1808, 1084 tithe cases! A mere citation in a tithe case, of the value of 18s. 10d., we are informed by Sir Henry Parke costs the defender fifty shillings.*

It will be remembered, early in the last autumn, that a meeting of Irish noblemen, and landed proprietors, was held in London, at the Thatched House Tavern, to take into consideration, the best means of alleviating the distresses of Ireland, when an alteration, in the present system of tithes, was considered indispensably necessary. A meeting also, in the county of Waterford, was held in September last, having in view the same object. Here it was not proposed, as it is observed, to call upon the legislature, to take away or even to diminish the revenues of the protestant church in Ireland. The moderation of the wishes of the landed proprietors is sufficiently testified by the first resolution adopted at the Waterford Meeting.

"First, That for the tranquillity and happiness of Ireland, it is expedient to substitute, for the present precarious and vexatious mode of supporting the clergy of the established church, a *full and liberal equivalent, fairly assessed and levied.*"

In what spirit is this proposition met by the clergy?—those ministers of peace, whom we are taught to esteem as the blessing of a country, and the dispensers of a religion "full of mercy and good fruits." From his Grace, the Archbishop of Armagh, Lord Primate of Ireland, we may collect the sentiments of the clergy. His Grace, during the recent visitation of his clergy, not only meets the question with a direct negative, but accuses those who are agitating it, with being actuated by a desire to overthrow the protestant church. He represents the proposed system of commutation, as dangerous to the interests of the clergy; and, rejecting all innovations, it is his lordship's fixed determination, as well, no doubt, as that of his reverend brethren, not to

* Edinburgh Review, for July 1822.

loose their holy grasp on the land! Justice—religion—charity—public sympathy apart, we blame not their indiscretion: it is impolitic to change the tenure when the title is in danger. The catholic clergy knew sufficiently the hazard of reforms, where the system itself was vicious. It was the saying of a Jesuit, concerning those proposed in France, that “*they would not extinguish one taper, though it were to convert all the Huguenots in France.*” And his Grace of Armagh will not consent to a commutation of tithes, though it were to give happiness to seven millions of people!! We have not before us the printed copy of the primate’s charge; we take, therefore, his lordship’s defence of the claims of the clergy as reported in the Irish papers.

“The education which clergymen received—the rank which custom had assigned them in society—and the many unnecessary expenses they were thereby forced into, all demanded that the reward should be ample; nor could this be considered detrimental to the public, when the whole was expended in the neighbourhood from whence it was derived.”

“The right of the clergy to tithes was enjoined by the scriptures of God, and confirmed by the laws of man.”

Now we venture, with suitable deference, to suggest, that every single idea of which the above reasoning is compounded, is contrary either to reason, to fact, or to scripture. “*The education which clergymen receive*”—is a very great evil; it leaves them with too much learning to understand Christianity, and too little virtue to practice it. “*The rank which custom had assigned them in society*”—is contrary to the humility of the gospel. “*The many unnecessary expenses they are thereby forced into*”—prove their imprudence in keeping bad company. “*All demanded that the reward should be ample:*”—the reasons were of no force separately; they obtain no momentum, therefore, by being united. “*Nor could this be considered detrimental to the public, when the whole was expended in the neighbourhood from whence it was derived,*”—which is not the case in Ireland; and if it were so would leave the neighbourhood just so much the poorer by all the amount of money taken from it, in tithe, seeing it cannot repossess that amount without giving an equivalent either in labour or commodities.*

“*The right of the clergy to tithes was enjoined by the scriptures of God, and confirmed by the laws of man;*” con-

* The late Earl of Bristol, Bishop of Derry, resided twenty years abroad, and received from his diocese during that time £.200,000.

firmed by the laws of man they *are*, and by the laws of man they can consequently be repealed: enjoined in the scriptures of God they *are not*; and the bishop must know very little of those scriptures if he is serious in thinking so. The Jewish priesthood was appointed by Deity to receive tithe, but the tithe has ended with the priesthood. The inspired teachers of Christianity were entitled to a maintenance, being appointed by God, to make a revelation of his will; but is that an argument in favour of a bishop, appointed by a king, to teach a "religion as by law established?"—"Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but—who are ye?"

The good bishop may, perhaps, contend that the claims of the clergy to support, are founded in simple justice, and that the principle of the apostle expresses this sentiment: "*If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*" (1 Cor. ix. 11.) The principle we deny, and the conclusion we dispute, as applicable to any but to the apostles. But at any rate, following out this principle, the *catholic population* of Ireland may be justified in saying to the *protestant clergy* "if you have *not* sown "unto us your spiritual things, is it a great thing that you "shall *not* reap our carnal things?"

The Irish clergy, it is apparent, are determined to keep what they have got; but some of our LONDON CLERGY are rendering themselves conspicuous, by their desire to obtain more. We allude to the exertions now making by some of the possessors of livings in the City, to increase their stipends; by availing themselves of a doubtful and obsolete act of parliament, by which they are seeking, by an appeal to the law, to enforce a claim of 2s. 9d. in the pound, on the rack rental of the inhabitants. In this "labour of love," the present rector of the parish of St. Andrew, Holborn, is rendering himself eminently conspicuous. This worthy clerk is suspected, in the City, to be, both in his politics and religion, an advocate for the doctrines of "passive obedience and non-resistance." Two years ago he ventured, through the public papers, to lecture the alderman of the ward in which his church is situate, for permitting, at a wardmote held in the church, that honest freedom of debate, for which the good men of Farringdon have been so long conspicuous. And now, although deriving from the parish £.1600 a year, besides the possession of a good house, he is, we are informed by the public prints, instituting a suit in the Court of Exchequer, against certain of his parishioners, for the recovery of a tithe, as he calls it,

of 2s. 9d. in the pound! which would increase his income to SEVEN THOUSAND PER ANNUM! Shade of SACHEVEREL! with what benignity must thou look down upon him who has caught thy mantle, and obtained thy benefice!*

On this monstrous proceeding of the reverend gentleman, in going to law with his parishioners, for an increased tithe, two observations occur to us. Mr. Beresford is engaged to administer spiritual consolation to his parishioners, for which they engage to pay him: so far it is a business transaction. But how is it, that, in a country so eminently commercial as England, *religion* should be the only article that is not left to find its fair market price? In the present instance the purchasers of Mr. Beresford's commodity say that it is worth only 6d. in the pound, (some, indeed, would rather decline it at *any price*) Mr. Beresford demands 2s. 9d.: the parties cannot agree; here, then, the matter ought to end—Mr. Beresford retaining his religion, and the parish their money: instead of which Mr. Beresford goes to law, to compel the public to take his article at more than they think it to be worth. But we take a higher objection to this: the reverend gentleman is at issue with his own flock—with the members of his own church—with his brethren; now, if his church be founded on scripture, and governed by its authority, why are not these differences decided by the church itself? "*Dare any of you, (says the apostle) 'having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?' 'Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? No! not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren.'*" Oh! but (Mr. Beresford will say) my brethren, in this case, are an interested party, I shall not receive justice. We answer him in the words of the same apostle; "*Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourself to be defrauded?*" We had almost continued our quotation to the next verse: "*Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that YOUR BRETHREN!*" Reader! consult, at thy leisure, the whole context; there follows a complete catalogue of those who are unworthy of the Christian character: "*Nor THIEVES, nor COVETOUS, nor REVILERS, nor EXTORTIONERS shall inherit the kingdom of God.*"—See 1 Cor. vi, 1 to 10.)

* The rich living of St. Andrew, Holborn, was given to the celebrated Dr. Sacheverel, by the tory faction, in the reign of Anne, as a reward for his high church bigotry, and for his fulminations against the principles of the Revolution.

It was our intention to have extracted from our newspaper file, a list of various crimes, offences, and misdemeanors, for which, during the present year, clergymen have been brought before the public courts of the country; upon examination, however, the cases appeared generally of a nature too scandalous to be introduced into our pages. One instance, however, of clerical infamy, towering high above the rest, has been rendered too painfully notorious not to be adverted to, in an article like the present. We content ourselves with quoting our testimony from the definitive sentence pronounced in this case, by the Lord Primate, at the metropolitan court of Armagh, the court having found that "The Right Reverend Father in God, "Percy Joslyn, by Divine Permission Bishop of Clogher, a "Suffragan Bishop of, and belonging to, our Province of "Armagh," &c. &c. "hath been guilty of the CRIMES, "EXCESSES, and IMMORALTIES articulated!"

The public have also been favoured with another, not unimportant exemplification of the character of the clergy, in an action for libel, instituted by the diocese of Durham, against the editor of the Durham Chronicle, and tried at the last summer assizes, at Durham. The circumstances of this case are all familiar to the reader. On the occasion of the funeral of England's late persecuted Queen, it was supposed the clergy of Durham had manifested a marked disrespect to the memory of her Majesty, in causing the bells of the cathedral to "*suppress their emotions*," as it was termed on the trial; upon which conduct the editor of the Durham Chronicle offered some bold and spirited animadversions, accusing the Durham clergy of being actuated by the most unchristian and unbecoming feelings, in their general conduct towards the Queen. The Lord Bishop of Durham, and his brethren of the diocese, endeavour to answer the accusation by sending the accuser to prison. They institute a criminal information, in the name of the king, against their assailant. The language which they charge as libelous, is to the following effect, as quoted on the trial:—

"Thus the brutal enmity of those who embittered her moral existence pursues her in her shroud. These men profess to be followers of Jesus Christ—to walk in his footsteps—to teach his precepts—to inculcate his spirit—to promote harmony, charity, and Christian love: *Out upon such hypocrisy!* It is such conduct which renders the very name of our established clergy odious, till it stinks in the nostrils! It is such conduct that makes our churches look like deserted sepulchres—that causes our beneficed dignitaries to be regarded as usurpers of their possessions. Sensible of the decline of

their moral influence, they cling to temporal power; and lose in their officiousness in political matters, even the semblance of the character of ministers of religion. It is impossible that such a system can last; it is at war with the spirit of the age, as well as with justice and reason; and the beetles who crawl about amidst its holes and crevices, act as if they were striving to provoke and accelerate the blow, which, sooner or later, will inevitably crush the whole fabric, and level it with the dust."

Now we will put out of view the truth or falsehood of the above accusations against the Durham clergy, and content ourselves with simply proving how inconsistent is their mode of treating their opponent with those scriptures, for the teaching of which they are so liberally rewarded.

The Durham clergy assert that the above accusations are false, and intended to revile them. Let it be so. "*Blessed are ye, when men shall REVILE you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you FALSELY, for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven!*" (Matt. v. 10, 11.) The public will believe how ill the clergy deserve censures like those directed against them in the Durham Chronicle, when they shall consent to treat such censures in the spirit of the apostles. "*Being reviled we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat.*" (1 Cor. iv. 11, 12.) And though the reverend institutors of this prosecution succeed in sending their enemy to a prison, and his family to a workhouse, the world will still fail to perceive how they have, thereby, heaped "*coals of fire on his head,*" or illustrated the Divine precept—"*be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.*" (1 Pet. iii. 8, 9.)

Mr. Brougham's speech for the defendant, in this prosecution, exhibited a most splendid and extraordinary display of talent; and some of the passages are too excellent not to be preserved in the Freethinking Christians' Register: they are also peculiarly appropriate to our present purpose, as descriptive of the character of the clergy. Mr. Brougham is a supporter of the church of England, and a friend to the clerical character, down even to the parish clerk; as will be remembered in his celebrated speech, on moving his education bill, in the House of Commons. And, on the present occasion, he describes the church establishment as "*built on a rock, and towering with its head to the other world,*" and as possessing "*an imperishable existence.*" Well then! what are the sentiments of this good churchman concerning the Durham clergy—an opulent and numerous

body, consisting of a lord bishop, an archdeacon, twelve prebends, and about eighty rectors, vicars, and curates?

In maintaining the right of freely examining all the institutions of the country, and the church itself, the learned gentlemen adopts the following language:—

“And if there is any part of England in which an ample license ought more especially to be admitted, in handling such matters, I say, without hesitation, it is this very bishopric, where, in the 19th century, you live under a Palatine Prince, the Lord of Durham; where the endowment of the hierarchy, I may not call it enormous, but, I trust, I shall be permitted, without offence, to term it splendid; where the establishment, I dare not whisper proves grinding to the people, but I will rather say it is an incalculable, an inscrutable blessing; only it is prodigiously large—showered down in a profusion somewhat overpowering, and laying the inhabitants under a load of obligation, overwhelming by its weight.

“I am taking it for granted that they all act the part of good shepherds, making the welfare of the flock their first care; and only occasionally bethinking them of shearing, in order to prevent the too luxuriant growth of the fleece proving an incumbrance, or to eradicate disease. If, however, these operations be so constant that the flock actually *live under the knife*—if the shepherds are so numerous and employ so large a troop of the watchful and eager animals that attend them (some of them, too, with a cross of the *far* or even the *wolf* in their breed) can it be wondered at if the poor creatures, thus fleeced, and hunted, and barked at, and snapped at and, from time to time, worried, should, now and then, bleat—dream of preferring the rot to the shears; and draw invidious, possibly disadvantageous, comparisons between the wolf without, and the shepherd within the fold? It cannot be helped—it is in the nature of things that suffering should beget complaint; but for those who have caused the pain to complain of the outcry, and seek to punish it—for those who have goaded to scourge and to gag, is the MEANEST OF ALL INJUSTICE!”

This right of the sheep to complain Mr. Brougham might have strengthened, by reference to the divine denunciations against shepherds such as he has described. “*Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ye eat the fat and ye clothe ye with the wool; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye sought that which was lost, but WITH FORCE AND WITH CRUELTY HAVE YE RULED THEM!*” (Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, 4.)

The following passage will convey a finished picture of the degree of hypocrisy, which Mr. Brougham ascribes to the clergy of the diocese of Durham. The counsel for the prosecution had represented, that the reason why the Durham clergy were not so loud in their grief for the death of

the queen, as the defendant, was—that they were, perhaps, more sincere. To which representation Mr. Brougham replies—

“That you may understand the meaning of this passage, it is necessary for me to set before you the picture my learned friend was pleased to draw of the clergy of the diocese of Durham, and I shall recall it to mind almost in his own words. According to him they stand in a peculiarly unfortunate situation—they are, in truth, the most injured of men. They all, it seems, entertained the same generous sentiment with the rest of their countrymen, though they did not express them in the free old English manner, by openly condemning the proceedings against the late queen; and after the course of unexampled injustice, against which she vigorously struggled, had been followed by the needless infliction of inhuman torture, to undermine a frame whose spirit no open hostility could daunt, and extinguish the life so long embittered by the same foul arts—after that great princess had ceased to harass her enemies (if I may be allowed thus to speak, applying, as they did, by the perversion of all language, those names to the victim which belong to the tormentor) after her glorious, but unhappy life, had closed, and that princely head was, at last, laid low by death—which living all oppression had only the more illustriously exalted—the venerable the clergy of Durham, I am now told, for the first time, though less forward in giving vent to their feelings than the rest of their fellow citizens—though not so vehement in their indignation at the matchless and unmanly persecution of the queen—though not so unbridled in their joy at her immortal triumph; nor so loud in their lamentations over her mournful and untimely end, did, nevertheless, in reality, all the while deeply sympathize with her sufferings, at the bottom of their reverend hearts. When all the resources of the most ingenious cruelty hurried her to a fate without parallel, if not so clamorous, they did not feel the least of all the members of the community; their grief was, indeed, too deep for utterance—sorrow clung round their bosoms, weighed upon their tongues, stifled every sound; and, when all the rest of mankind, of all sects and of all nations, freely gave vent to the feelings of our common nature, THEIR silence, the contrast which THEY displayed to the rest of their species, proceeded from the greater depth of their affliction—they said the less because they felt the more! Oh! talk of HYPOCRISY after this! MOST CONSUMMATE OF ALL HYPOCRITES! After instructing your chosen official advocate to stand forward with such a defence—such an exposition of your motives, to dare utter the word hypocrisy, and complain of those who charged you with it! This is, indeed, to insult common sense, and outrage the feelings of the whole human race! If you were hypocrites before, you were *downright, frank, honest hypocrites* to what you have now made yourselves; and surely, for all you have ever done, or ever been charged with, your worst enemies must be satiated with the humiliation of this day, its JUST ATONEMENT AND AMPLE RETRIBUTION!!”

Can we wonder that, at the conclusion of such a period, nature should have risen superior to all restraints, and have vented her approbation in a long and loud applause, which the court could neither suppress nor controul. But let it be borne in mind, that this is the language—these are the sentiments of an admirer of the clergy—a communicant of the church:—it is MR. BROUGHAM who gives this picture of the DURHAM PRIESTHOOD!

It is pertinent to our present purpose to advert to a very singular discourse, delivered in July last, to the clergy of the diocese of London, by the Lord Bishop of London. There peeps out, in this charge, we suspect, somewhat of an APOLOGY *for the clergy*; and this, indeed, not before it was wanted: some oblique suggestion is also given as to the prudence of their amending their manners. We scarcely know whether we understand his lordship aright; for the discourse, though well written, and containing some excellent points, is, nevertheless, so cautiously prepared, and mixed up with such opposite ingredients, balanced together in such nice chemical proportions as to produce, when combined, a mere nursery draught—perfectly neutral and inoffensive. The rapid diffusion of knowledge, and cultivation of intellect, among all classes, in the present age, form a subject matter of reflection in this discourse. These are circumstances that do not, at least, excite the ecstasies of the right reverend bishop: like Lot's wife, the good bishop looks back upon that state of darkness and crime, which the lightning of genius and the fires of heaven are destroying; and seems, in his present charge, to bid

“ — a long—a last—a sad farewell ”

to those good and olden times of the church, “when” (to adopt his own words) “reverence to OFFICIAL STATION might protect the *infirmity*, or throw a veil over the *failings* of the minister!!!”

But my lord bishop is certainly a sensible man, he does not permit himself to quarrel outright with what he can neither suppress nor controul, but prudently suggests such advice as shall enable his reverend brethren to shift, as well as they can, in the dilemma to which, upon his own shewing, the increased knowledge of the age has reduced them.*

“But” (says the charge, page 12) “of the general improvement which took place in society, at the revival of letters, *the largest portion had fallen to the share of the LAITY*. The clergy, from various causes, were not benefited, in an equal degree; and, from this alteration in their relative circumstances, and its effects on the feelings of the public, they necessarily lost the ascendancy which had been *preserved without difficulty*, by their less meritorious predecessors, in a darker age. In referring to these historical facts, it is simply my object to urge the necessity of maintaining our proper position, in

* “It is not easy to calculate the multiplied *difficulties* which, from these “and similar causes, increase on the clergymen, as the world advances in “knowledge.”—See *Charge*, p. 13.

relation to the mass of society; to press the important truth, that, if other classes advance in knowledge, intelligence, virtue; and piety, and the CLERGY, whatever are their positive merits, in all these respects, *continue stationary*; they are placed on a different level in regard to their flocks, and will suffer a proportional loss, in their credit and weight with the public, and consequently in their professional utility!!”

This is all very proper in his lordship, and peculiarly well-timed; but then it is not to be supposed that he admits the moral and intellectual deficiencies of the clergy—oh, no! this he afterwards denies; and, indeed, asserts his belief in their superior excellence to the other classes of society, thereby proving how unnecessary was the above exhortation. Nay, his Lordship volunteers a defence of the clergy against the charge of being “*hirelings*.”

“The *hiring*” (says the charge) “is he, whether beneficed or not, who acts on personal views of pleasure or profit, without concern for the welfare of his flock; and nothing can be less consistent with truth than the imputation of such criminal profligacy, on any description of the clergy.”

We like the definition here given of the “*hireling*,” and let the reader consult history—let him take a review of the present state of the religious world—let him consult only the evidence brought together in these pages, and say whether there is not good reason to suspect that the clergy do “act on personal views of pleasure or profit, without concern for the welfare of the flock;”—let him remember their treatment of “the flock,” as described by Mr. Brougham.

We have opened and supported our case against the clergy, by reasons and by facts—we close it by authorities; and we content ourselves with two only, which were quoted by Mr. Brougham, in the trial alluded to.

Dr. Hartley, in speaking on this subject, states

“I choose to speak of what falls under the observation of all serious, attentive persons, in the kingdom. THE SUPERIOR CLERGY are, in general, ambitious, and eager in the pursuit of riches—flatterers of the great, and subservient to party interest; negligent of their own particular charges, and also of the inferior clergy. THE INFERIOR CLERGY imitate their superiors, and, in general, take little more care of their parishes than barely what is necessary to avoid the censure of the law; and the clergy of all ranks are, in general, either ignorant, or, if they do apply, it is rather to profane learning, to philosophical or political matters, than to the study of the scriptures, of the Oriental language, and the fathers. I say this is, in general, the case; *that is, FAR THE GREATER PART OF THE CLERGY, OF ALL RANKS, IN THE KINGDOM, ARE OF THIS KIND.*”

Dr. Hartley is very properly pronounced, by the late

bishop Watson to have been "*a wise and good man, and a firm believer in revealed Religion.*"

Our next authority is that of Dr. Simson, a beneficed clergyman of the county Palatine of Chester, who, in his reply to PAINE, anticipates the time when

"The lofty looks of lordly prelates shall be brought low, the supercilious airs of downy doctors and perjured prelates shall be humbled; the horrible sacrilege of non-residents—who shear the fleece and leave the flock, thus despoiled of the charge, to uninterested hirelings, that care not for them—shall be avenged on their impious heads. INTEMPERATE PRIESTS, AVARICIOUS CLERKS, and BUCKISH PARSONS—those curses of Christendom, shall be confounded!"

In conclusion we beg to observe, that, in the exposition now given of the character and crimes of the clergy, we cannot too distinctly disclaim being actuated by any feelings of personal hostility against any class of men; however necessary may have been the task we have now performed, we should reflect on it with shame, if we felt we had been prompted thereto by any feelings other than those which are inspired by a love of truth, and a sense of Christian duty. We are not insensible that, with a respect for the clerical character and an attachment for ecclesiastical institutions, many excellent and religious feelings are associated and bound up; and it is because we respect such feelings, and wish to cultivate and render them more enduring, that we labour to withdraw them from a connexion, in which they are exposed to the continual liability of interruption and of doubt, by the conduct of those from whose words the possessors of such feelings seek instruction, and from whose lives they draw example. Nor do we rest here: our desire is, that every amiable feeling of the heart—every devout affection of the mind—every hope of present mercy and future favour—may be transferred to a surer and a better ground of dependence—to a study of HIS life, and an obedience to HIS precepts, who is "*the guide and complete pattern of our faith,*" Divine Teacher! Honoured Master! Beloved of God! How exemplary was thy life—how pure thy objects; how sublime thy doctrines! "*To whom shall we go? THOU hast the words of eternal life!*"

Reader! let not the review of the character of the clergy, here presented, excite in thy bosom, one unkind feeling—one vindictive thought. Remember that their conduct becomes of importance, chiefly as an exemplification of the system—the corrupt antichristian system of worldly,

political religion which they support, and by which they are supported. Under the influence of such a system we do not expect to find them—they cannot indeed be—other than they are; nor do we think it desirable, for the interests of truth, they should be so. No! rather do we, in contemplating this SPIRITUAL BABYLON, derive consolation from the reflection that no transient ray illumines her dark horizon—no redeeming virtues present themselves in her princes, her rulers, and her merchants, to protract that FALL, which, if there be justice in heaven, or truth in prophecy, must, sooner or later, take place!

REMARKS ON THE DUE INFLUENCE OF THE PASSIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Quarterly Register.

SIR,

To ascertain what degree of influence the passions ought to have on the Christian character, is a subject of considerable importance, to all who—having the high privilege of membership in the Christian church—are desirous of perfecting their characters, and fitting themselves for the enjoyment of a future life. I am aware that to treat upon a subject of this kind fully, and in all its details, would require much metaphysical knowledge; but I propose only to submit a few brief and popular remarks, tending to shew the importance of a due regulation of the passions; and that those individuals who have become members of the Christian church, are imperatively called upon to subject their minds and dispositions to the controul and influence of reason, and the principles of Christianity.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the churches in Galatia, says "*Now they that are of Christ (Christianity) have crucified the flesh with the passions and the desires thereof;*" (Gal. v. 24, 25) meaning that the Christian should hold his mind and body equally in subjection, and by the controul

and mastery of his passions, be enabled, if necessary, to offer himself up, as it were, a sacrifice, devoted to the cause of truth. Not, indeed, that the passions should be annihilated: Christianity does not extinguish the legitimate use of any one feeling or faculty of the mind; it only furnishes the mind with a strong and influential motive to bring them under the government of reason and religious principle.

Let us, in order to ascertain their due degree of influence, consider the *use* of the passions. They were implanted in the human breast for the wisest and best of purposes; they are powerful instruments in the formation of our characters; they operate as an impetus to exertion in the acquirement of knowledge, and in the attainment of excellence; and upon their judicious or injudicious application will depend whether we become wise or foolish—virtuous or vicious—exalted or debased in our characters. The feelings and the passions are, as it were, the springs of action, without whose influence we should become inert, and possess no excitement to labour or exertion; when enduring pain or affliction, we could never act with fortitude; in the hour of danger, or in the day of trial we should be devoid of courage and firmness; and when our minds were exposed to scenes of gloom and despair, or our hearts oppressed with grief and sorrow, we should be incapable of that serenity and satisfaction which hope never fails to inspire, under the most adverse circumstances; neither should we be capable of being aroused to the performance of noble, disinterested, or exalted and benevolent actions. Thus, then, it will be seen, that the passions are necessary to empower man to fulfil the functions of his nature. It is only when they are indulged to excess—when they lead and govern, instead of being subservient to the voice of reason and nature, to the dictates of principle, and the spirit of Christianity, that they become prejudicial to our well-being, and injurious in their influence. They are, indeed, bad masters, but excellent servants. It is, when so indulged, that, instead of emulation, we practice and cherish envy; instead of love, we imbibe hatred; instead of hope, we are depressed by slavish fear and timidity; instead of forbearance and forgiveness, we are actuated with resentment and revenge; and instead of humility and true self-respect, we manifest pride, vanity, and egotism. Now, surely, no one will say that these ought to influence the Christian character:—he who is commanded to “*render to no one, evil for evil;*” to “*let all bitterness, and passion, and*

"anger, and noise, and evil speaking, be removed from him;" he who is called upon to furnish his *"belief with virtue; his virtue with knowledge; his knowledge with self-command; his self-command with patience; his patience with piety; his piety with brotherly affection; his brotherly affection with universal benevolence!"* And yet, if we look into what is falsely termed the Christian world, we shall too often see the Christian name associated with the existence of those feelings, and the gratification of those passions, which, in their uncontrolled indulgence, and excessive influence, most disgrace and most degrade our nature. There are, however, feelings or passions apparently of a milder or a less important kind, though, perhaps, equally injurious in their consequences, which are considered light and venial, and, therefore, become more dangerous. How often, for instance, do we see persons, calling themselves Christians, become angry, irritable, and dogmatical, the moment you attempt to differ from them, about matters of religion; not consenting to reason or discuss the difference of opinion! How many indulge their inclinations and appetites, and are guided solely by feeling, in all their actions! Now this is wholly incompatible with that high and dignified tone of character, which ought to distinguish the Christian; the humble follower of the wisest, the most virtuous and enlightened man that ever existed—Jesus of Nazareth! It was his recommendation that, if the hand or foot were leading to sin, to cut it off, and cast it from us; that, if the eye were leading to sin, to pluck it out. Now this, in figurative language, is descriptive of that line of conduct which the Christian ought to pursue: he is not to temporize—nothing should induce him to swerve from principle and consistency, however alluring the bait;—no indulgence, however necessary to his comfort—no passion, however tempting—no habit, however long it may have been practised—no feeling, however acute or sensitive, should be continued, or at all influence the conduct, unless they can bear the test of truth, and the scrutinizing eye of reason and religion. If they will not pass through this rigid ordeal of the judgment, then we should pluck them out—cut them off—and cast them from us! This language of Jesus shews that we are imperatively called upon to annihilate such bad feelings from our minds—to emancipate ourselves from their slavery; and if we do not, we must pronounce our own condemnation, and the consequences will be upon our own heads! But what can be the cause of this irregu-

larity in the passions, and the abuses to which they are liable? As Cogan, in his *Ethical Treatise on the Passions*, asks, "Is it the irrevocable law of our constitution, that we shall be incited to pursue what we are never to attain? Has some evil being blinded our eyes—perverted our judgment—destroyed our power—and blasted all our fairest hopes? Or, are we ourselves the culpable causes of so much misery, while, apparently, surrounded by so many means of happiness?" He then says, "No one has ever denied the existence of the following causes: *ignorance, the influence of present objects, and of inordinate self-love.*" And, after considering briefly the influence of each of these causes, in rendering the affections irregular, and the passions excessive, he says, "since each of these causes abovementioned produces separate effects, so inimical to human welfare—since each has its own characteristic perversion of the passions and affections, and is chargeable with the correspondent evils, what miseries, may not be diffused by their union? What can be conceived more fatal to the welfare of mankind than the darkest ignorance—the presence of objects, either exciting desire or aversion—and ungovernable self-love, united in the persons of those who possess the power to accomplish every purpose of their hearts? This dire assemblage constitutes the perfection of tyranny, with all its baneful consequences! It diffuses the agonizing sensations of fear, dread, consternation, grief, anguish, and horror, in every direction, and fills those regions of the earth with misery, which becomes subject to its wretched empire."

Here, then, we have the causes and consequences of an irregular influence of the passions, on the character and conduct of man. That they exist to the extent pointed out is certain; and that they are injurious and destructive to the best interests of the human character is equally certain. The Christian, I have shewn, is particularly called upon to free himself from their trammels.

"Man know thyself: all wisdom centres there"—

is a maxim which the Christian cannot too often attend to; for, if he would let his passions have their due influence, and would guard against their improper bias, he must practice self-examination and private prayer; he must endeavour to attain that purity of character which Paul recommends, when he says, in his epistle to the Romans,

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by these compassionate kindnesses of God, to present your bodies for a living sacrifice, and holy, well pleasing unto God; that religious service of reason, which ye owe: and conform not yourselves to the present manner, but transform yourselves by the renewal of your minds, that ye may shew in yourselves what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Wakefield.)

R. N.

THE CHARACTER OF AN HONEST FREETHINKER.

By John Ryland M.A. of Northampton.

THE addition of the epithet *Freethinking* to the Title of *Christian*, in the description commonly given of our church, has always given offence to many who have not understood our views and motives. The best men, and the most enlightened of all ages, and those who have done most good to society, have been *freethinkers*. Bad men—designing men—*un-thinking* men, have also laid claim to the appellation; but it is as producing a belief in Christianity, and in connexion with the practice of its principles, that we think freedom of thought most valuable.

Our ideas on the "Character of an honest Freethinker" we have found so well expressed in a small publication which has fallen into our hands that we have been induced to extract the following passages for the perusal of our readers. The original pamphlet is entitled "*A Contemplation on the Insufficiency of Reason and the Necessity of Divine Revelation to enable us to attain Eternal Happiness. To which is prefixed THE CHARACTER OF AN HONEST FREETHINKER.*" By John Ryland M. A. of Northampton. London 1775."

It may be well to observe that some intermediate passages not essential to the sense, or not so distinguished for excellence as the rest, have been omitted.

"IN the conduct of my studies, many years ago, I fixed it as an unalterable rule, that I would take nothing upon trust, but as far as possible see every thing with my own eyes, and feel the truth of every great subject of religion in my own mind, as the result of rational and solid conviction.

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“As I am fully convinced of the absolute necessity of a divine revelation, so I have inquired with the utmost care and deliberation into the possibility of it, and have proceeded to consider the nature of inspiration, as far as I could attain clear and determinate ideas on such a most delicate and sublime subject.

“I have found by happy experience, that if a man have an honest love of truth, a just sense of the defects of his own mind, an humble dependance on God to assist him in laying aside prejudices: and if he proceed with caution and by slow and sure steps, there is no subject in the whole system of truth and religion but what he may investigate, so far as it hath a relation to his duty and happiness.

“It is the greatest honour to a human character to be an honest inquirer after truth; and although I will not say I have attained this character, yet I will dare to affirm that I love and admire it, and I wish to possess so great an excellence.

“As I write chiefly for my young friends, I will endeavour to give them the outlines of such a character; in order that they may keep it ever before their eyes, and feel a generous ambition to be what they love and revere.

“All persons, who devote themselves to the study of religion and the pursuit of learning, profess themselves free inquirers after truth, and rational freethinkers; but if we try many of them by the true and eternal rules of just freethinking, we shall find them wanting in all the essential qualities of a true freethinker; and if my idea of freethinking be right, we may justly say, ‘How few honest and free searchers after truth are there to be found in the world! how arduous the labour! how honourable the character!’

“A most sincere and honest freethinker is just the opposite to an infidel, a sceptic, a sophist. An infidel is not willing that all should be true, which God has declared to be true. A sceptic doubts of every thing, and is sure of nothing. A sophist attempts to impose on your understanding the most specious errors in the garb of truth; he deludes you with the shadow instead of the substance of truth. Not so the honest freethinker: he is just the reverse of such odious and contemptible characters! he is heartily willing that ALL should be true, which God has discovered to be true, whether by reason or revelation. He is resolved to submit to evidence as fast as it shall arise before the eyes of his mind, and he scorns to impose one single thought on mankind, of which he is not fully convinced in his own conscience.

“ But to possess this glorious character, the mind must be smitten with the beauties and charms of truth; we must be purified from every species of lust, pride, and extravagant self-love; we must be cured of our boundless self-admiration, and fond desires of a vain distinction; we must be made honest in the very essence and powers of the soul for ever.

“ A man thus qualified is a generous and upright free-thinker: if you severely examine his internal character you find in him the following great qualities:

“ He has an ardent love to truth, merely on account of its excellent nature, beauty, and goodness; he loves it purely for its own sake; an infidel does not; he doth not love truth for its own intrinsic goodness and beauty. The good man fears no consequences that can follow from truth, and therefore he lays open his whole soul to the light of evidence, and is determined to follow wherever truth shall lead the way.

“ He is willing from the very bottom of his soul to divest himself of all prejudices, and to put off all opinions and notions, that will not stand the test of a severe and impartial examination.

“ He is resolved to use all the best helps that God has put in his power, or laid within his reach for the attainment of truth.

“ He is determined to embrace truth, even all truth, wherever he meets with it, and from whatsoever hand it comes: whether from a throne or from a dunghill; a palace or a cottage; from a child, a Newton, or a Paul.

“ He is invariably resolved to buy the truth at any rate, and sell it at no price; but will rather part with all that is dear to him in this world, than part with this jewel. He will give up his name, his estate, his blood and life, rather than betray or part with the truth. He makes an honest use of his reason to find out the truth, or the real nature and relation of things.

“ He uses his understanding in such modes of operation as these: (viz.) in considering the degree of evidence or clear appearance of truth in the mind:—in determining to judge according to the apparent strength or weakness of the evidence before him, on any important question:—in ballancing evidence on both sides of a question, and embracing that side on which the weight of evidence preponderates.

“ Honest freethinking gloriously appears in thus con-

sidering impartially the nature of the evidence FOR or AGAINST any point that is proposed to us for truth.

“A man of this spirit and disposition looks upon it as bondage of thought and the mark of a low slavish soul, to contradict or despise a truth without inquiring into it, merely because it has been commonly received, for a thousand or seventeen hundred years past. Such is the bondage and slavery of soul in all those who contradict or despise the evidences of divine revelation.

“True freethinking does not consist in a power or a right to dissent from the eternal principles of right reason and truth, but in being superior to vile bigotry and low prejudices, which imprison and debase the soul.

“An honest and generous freethinker is not attached to any low party or faction in divinity or philosophy; nor is he a slave to his own vile passions, or to the passions or humours of other men: he scorns to be under the arbitrary will, or the tyrannic pleasure and influence of his superiors, in mere civil power, or worldly honours and emoluments—but truth, eternal, almighty, and all amiable truth, is the sovereign of his soul, the empress of his heart. He dedicates himself to truth alone, and aims and wishes to be for ever a disciple to pure and beautiful truth.

“An honest freethinker will not suffer himself to be driven from truth by the faults or the foolishness of those that profess it. He does not forsake REVEALED TRUTH, and leave it bleeding in the dust, on account of sneaking and impure hypocrites, artful impostors, or imperious tyrants, who profess it and disgrace it; and are the curse and bane of the most sacred and beautiful system in the world.

“To conclude this sketch of the beautiful character of an honest freethinker:—He disdains the thought of a secret indulgence of sensual lusts, or the foul appetites of the flesh:—he knows that a gratification of the unclean inclinations of his body, are utterly inconsistent with all greatness of soul, and generous freedom of thought.

“An honest free inquirer after truth scorns to persist in an error, because he has in some things, and at sometimes, made a mistake, or formed a wrong apprehension of some objects.

“He is not ashamed nor afraid to say, at such a time, or in such an affair, ‘I WAS MISTAKEN.’

“This is not the temper of our modern Deists, who having from some *bad springs* rejected divine revelation, and set themselves up as advocates for reason and natural religion alone,

their pride prompts them to persist in the way of error, and they disdain the thought of acknowledging themselves in the wrong.

“Not so the true freethinker: he accounts it a victory to conquer his own pride; and to change an error for truth, he esteems an eternal gain.”

DRYDEN AND SOUTHEY; OR, THE BLASPHEMY OF POETS LAUREAT.

“Tis from high life high characters are drawn,
“A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn;
“Wise if a minister; but, if a king,
“More wise—more just—more learned—more every thing.”

It has been a common, but, perhaps, an excusable error, of rational Christians to suppose, that, in the eyes of heaven, all ranks of men are equal; and that the ways of the God of the universe are much too far above our ways, to induce him to pay respect to the earthly distinctions of wealth, power and dominion. Such, however, is not the doctrine of courts and courtiers; and such has never been the faith, as it has been held by pensioned bards, and *poets laureat* of all ages.

We have, before us, two striking instances of the respect described as having been paid by heaven to crowned heads; and we submit them for the amusement of our readers, provided a feeling of amusement be not overpowered by a sense of the sickening servility, and abominable extent of blasphemy, which characterize both productions.

The one of these is a tribute paid, by the muse of Dryden, to the memory of *Charles II.*; the other is a description of the beatification of *George III.* by the author of *Wat Tyler*, Robert Southey; each of these writers, at the time, wearing “*the laurel*,” and enjoying one hundred pounds, and a butt of sack, per annum, as a reward for, and an assistance in, their labours, as court poets.

And, first for the first, it is entitled “A FUNERAL PIN-
“DARIQUE POEM, SACRED TO THE HAPPY MEMORY OF

KING CHARLES II. BY JOHN DRYDEN, SERVANT TO HIS LATE MAJESTY, AND THE PRESENT KING."

The poet, beginning by asserting that "*Thus long his grief had kept him dumb*," proceeds to describe the serenity of the heavens, as disturbed by a thunder clap and a hurricane, announcing that "*our gracious prince is dead*." The prince, his brother, afterwards James II., runs, "*half-unarrayed*," to the spot; but finds (of course to his great joy) that the king has not yet expired. Let it be remembered that it is *Charles II.* of whom the Poet Laureat is now about to speak:—

"God's image—God's anointed lay,
Without a motion, pulse, or breath;
A senseless lump of sacred clay,
An image now of death."

All are employed in watching "*the lines of that adored, for-giving face*." The scene changes. Heaven is grieved, and appears to relent. Mercy and forgiveness intercede. With regard to the holy king's successor,

"On earth his pious brother prayed—and vowed—
Renouncing greatness at so dear a rate!"

Whilst, as for his subjects, they

"All for his life assailed the throne,
And would have bribed the skies by offering up their own!"

The effects are—what might be anticipated:—

"So great a throning not heaven itself could bear—
'Twas almost borne by force, as in the giant's war:
The prayers at last for his reprieve were heard;
His death—*like Hezekiah's*—was deferred."

For five days his "*fleeting soul lingers*:" heaven is described as *wishing* to work a miracle, using "*medicinal aids*" as its "*second causes*." Efforts, however, are vain; he bears tortures Cæsar could not have sustained; his physicians stand aghast;—at length

"Death was announced—that frightful sound—
Which e'en the best can hardly bear!
He took the summons void of fear,
Nor lost the monarch in his dying face.
Intrepid, *pious*, merciful, and brave
He looked, as when he conquered and forgave;
As if some angel had been sent
To lengthen out his government;—
So cheerfully he took the doom
Of his departing breath!"

He presses the hand of the prince, his brother, whom the poet (when writing, become "*the servant*" of that brother, James II.) describes as one on whom

"If heaven its eyes could close,
The welfare of the world it safely might repose."

Unable to describe the mutual affection of these parting brothers, the picture is cast into the shade. Of Charles, however, he exclaims—of the *second* Charles too—

"That all-forgiving king,
The type of him above!
That inexhausted spring
Of clemency and love!"

Amid the bustle of this scene, however, the king dies.

"The royal mind
Then left its *sacred earth* behind.
Calm was his life, and quiet was his death—
Soft as those gentle whispers were
In which the *Almighty* did appear!"

The poet then proceeds to speak of him as one "*blest above, almost invoked below;*" compares him to "*saints by supernatural love set free;*" and discovers, as a source of consolation for his death at last, that

"Heaven did his gracious reign prolong,
E'en in its *saints and angels* wrong;
His fellow citizens of *immortality!*"

Charles, by a poetical figure, is now discovered to have been "*the quails*" and "*the manna:*" the hope of better things, however, present themselves to the laureat's mind. James, "*the promised land*" itself, is now in view. The mode of manufacturing kings, as described in the following lines, is a curious one, and throws considerable light upon the history of both past and present times:—

"A warlike prince ascends the regal state—
Long may he keep—though he obtains it late,
Heroes in heaven's peculiar mould are cast—
They, and their poets are not formed in haste;
For, e'er a prince is to perfection brought,
He costs Omnipotence a second thought."

Second thoughts, however, it would appear, are *not* always best; for the history of all the nations of the earth may be triumphantly appealed to, in support of Pain's well-known assertion, that "*kings have been below the average of mankind.*"

The transition is a natural one, from *Thomas Paine* to the less respectable, because less consistent, author of *Wat Tyler*. The other work of which we propose giving an analysis is—"A VISION OF JUDGMENT. BY ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQUIRE, LL. D. POET LAUREAT.—*London*, 1821"—in 4to. The first canto of this poem is entitled "*The Trance*." Lightning, and the "*rushing of winds*," and the "*roaring of waters*," proclaim the death of George III., as before of his ancestor Charles II. The poet, not inaptly, describes the effect of this hurricane upon himself.

"Of strength and of thought it bereft me;
Hearing, and thought, and sense were gone."

Though *thought* and *sense* are gone, an instinctive feeling of *loyalty* remains. Transported in his vision to "*The Vault*," he beholds the resurrection of George III., the late King of England.

"The grave was gone and the dead was awakened.
Then I beheld the king from a cloud which covered the pavement—
His reverend form uprose; heaven-ward his face was directed;
Heaven-ward his eyes were raised; and heaven-ward his arms were
extended."

The express language of Jesus is here put into the mouth of George. "*Lord, it is past, he cried.*" "*Father, to thee I come.*" "*O Lord, in thee have I trusted.*"

The gate of heaven is now described; King George appears before it.

"O'er the adamant gate an Angel stood in the summit.
Ho! he exclaimed, King George of England cometh to judgment!
Hear heaven! ye Angels, hear! souls of the good and wicked,
Whom it concerns, attend! thou hell bring forth his accusers!"

Because George III. has been released "*from mental and visual darkness*," that is, is no longer blind and mad; and, because he has appeared at the "*gate of heaven*," all the universe is described as collecting around. God himself is first named (with a degree of impiety almost appalling) as "*coming down*" on this special occasion.

"Anon a body of splendour
Gathered before the gate and veiled the *Ineffable Presence*,
Which (with a rushing of winds) *came down*!"

On so important an event as this the Deity comes not unattended.

"Round the cloud were the orders of heaven—Archangel and Angel, Principality, Cherub, and Seraph; Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, and Powers. The souls of the good whom death had made perfect."

Amongst this "*shining assembly*" of the blessed, are, of course, found the advocates; or, as they are called, "*absolvers*" of the late king.*

At equal length, as approaching from "*the opposite region*," the "*spirits accurst*" are described, attended by the "*souls of the wicked*," and marshalled by the Princes of Darkness. All hell, as well as all heaven, attend on this important occasion. It is only amongst the fiends that "*the accusers*" of George III. are to be found. Two—intended to represent Junius and John Wilkes!—stand forth; but these, finding the eye of George III. "*insupportably dreadful!*" are described as "*dumb in his presence*;" at which one of the demons is so incensed, that

"With horrible grin gigantic,†
Seizing the guilty pair, he swung them aloft; and in vengeance
Hurled them all abroad: far into the sulphureous darkness—
Whirling away they flew."

Mr. Southey, his own former experience, no doubt, assisting him, here draws the moral of the tale:—

"Sons of faction, be warned! and ye, ye slanderers, learn ye
Justice, and bear in mind that after death there is judgment."

The monarch is then told, by "*the voice of an Angel*," that there is "*none to arraign him*;" as well, indeed, might be

* Amongst "*the souls of the good whom death hath made perfect*," are afterwards particularly named, as assembled to receive the late monarch, King William III. and Charles I. (The *Second Charles*—shade of Dryden, pardon the neglect!—is *not* particularly mentioned.) Edward the Black Prince is present: Chaucer, Cranmer, the Duke of Marlborough, General Wolfe, Captain Cook, Hogarth, Westley, Warren Hastings, and Lord Nelson!!! Further than this "*the worthies of the Georgian age*" (*retaining their allegiance beyond the grave*) are described as forming a train, whom "*nearer duty attracted!*" and who, therefore,

"Thro' the gate of bliss came forth to welcome their sovereign."

In the other world, then, it seems we are also to have a court and a west-end of the town; shall we there, too, be pestered with Mr. Southey's poetry, so called? Will he hammer the language of heaven into hexameters? Will he there, too, write visions at per annum, and sing staves of loyalty over his sack? "If the Spaniards are to be in heaven" (said the Indian) "let me go to the other place."

† "Grin gigantic!" *Quere*—A broad grin?

the case, seeing the manner in which his "*accusers*" had been previously disposed of. The King of England now addresses his "*father*," (for so he calls the Deity) praying, indeed, for pardon for his errors, but taking credit to himself that "*the desire of his heart had been always the good of his people.*" This boast

"Bending forward, he spake with earnest humility. Well done Good and faithful servant, then said a voice from the brightness, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. *The ministering spirits Clapt their pennons therewith, and from that whole army of Angels Songs of thanksgiving, and joy resounded, and loud hallelujahs.*"

The important business which had brought him over, the Deity is now suffered by the poet to depart.

"On the wings of winds upraised the pavilion of splendour,
Where inscrutable light enveloped the holy of holies,
Moved and was borne away."

The *beatification* of the king immediately follows; he drinks of "*the well of life*," and is

"For eternity formed, and to bliss everlasting appointed."

More, however, is yet to come. "*Lift up your gates*," (such is the language of the psalmist) "*and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.*" "*Who*" (he asks) "*is the King of Glory?*" **THE LORD OF HOSTS, HE IS THE KING OF GLORY!** As the climax of his blasphemy, our poet laureat transfers this language from God, and applies it to George III.! This may appear incredible, but take his own words.

"*Lift up your heads ye gates, and ye everlasting portals
Be ye lift up! for lo! A GLORIFIED MONARCH APPROACHES—
One who in righteousness reigned, and religiously governed his people.*"

After this triumphal entry into heaven, King George (who had before had an interview with Mr. Percival, and conversed with him on the state of the nation*) now meets with his father and mother; with some of his children; and with—"the nation's example of virtue!"—Queen Charlotte.

* It is observable that amid the incongruous mass assembled, under the name of "*the worthies of the Georgian age*," William Pitt is not mentioned as being present. Were there unpleasant recollections connected with the period of 1792, which compelled to silence the now laureated author of *Wat Tyler*?

"All, all that was lost is restored him;
 Hour of perfect bliss that o'er pays all earthly affliction!
 They are met where change is not known, nor sorrow, nor parting;
 Death is subdued, and the grave which conquers all hath been conquered."

THIS it is to make religion a matter of worldly policy; to connect it with temporal power, and to call it "*part and parcel of the law of the land.*" Who shall speak of impiety, or of blasphemy, after this? No comment can, to the uncorrupted mind, make it more apparent; no words can express the abhorrence which every pious and sensible mind must feel at such servile sentiments—such an abuse of the sacred name of God, and the holy principles of religion! Thus it is (according to the cant of the world *called* Christian) that men take rank in heaven, exactly in conformity to their rank on earth. Thus it is that the great, the rich, and the powerful—particularly all those who rule as monarchs—are revered as Christians here, and assured of beatification hereafter! How different were the views of an apostle! How ignorant was Paul of the ways of providence, and the nature of Christianity, compared with Robert Southey! "*For ye see by your calling, brethren, how that not many mighty men after the flesh, not many noble, are called; for God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE.*"

If any one thing more strongly than another could shew the extreme folly of attributing superior excellence, wisdom, and holiness to individuals, merely on account of the superiority of their worldly station, it would, perhaps, be the two instances of "*religious and gracious kings*" above referred to: the one, *Charles II.*! a name in after ages synonymous with every thing that is licentious, superficial, and profane. The other, *George III.*! who—but of him (as of his predecessors) history and posterity must speak; we cannot, in the present day, *with safety*, write of him, or of his reign, as *truth* would compel us to write: we prefer, therefore, to be silent, and to leave the rest to be supplied by our readers.

Since the above article was written, Lord Byron too has slept; and his "*Vision of Judgment*" is also before the world. A certain party, who were silent with regard to Mr. Southey's work, or perhaps warm in its praise, have commenced a furious attack upon the reply, as abounding in sedition and blasphemy. Against the latter charge we should, by no means, feel inclined to defend it. Like other of the *noble* author's writings, it, no doubt, if tried by the high standards of morality, religion, and even good taste, has many and great faults to answer for; but these, in his case, are evident to all the world, and nearly all the world are ready enough to condemn them. The

blasphemy of the Poet Laureat, however, is quite as abhorrent to our feelings as the blasphemy of the Peer; and if we join in censuring each, we think the more unqualified reprobation should fall on the head of that man who abuses religion, whilst he *professes* to value it; who takes the sacred name of God in vain, as a part of the duties of an office, which he holds under government; who deals "*damnation round the land*," amongst his personal foes and his political enemies; and who makes the throne and the presence of heaven itself subservient to his views, when cringing at the footstool of an earthly monarch. (*Vide* the dedication of the *Vision of Judgment* to George IV.)

THE FREETHINKING CHRISTIANS' REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL WORLD.

A *political* review in a work professedly *religious*, would appear, at first sight, to require some apology; and were its object merely of a political nature, we are of opinion would scarcely admit of excuse. It is the express declaration of Jesus "*my kingdom is not of this world*;" and as most of those men who engage in political concerns *are* men of this world, having worldly objects and motives, the case must be of rare occurrence when the disciple of Jesus can, with propriety, or safety to his own character and principles, take any very active part with them; and even upon those occasions, in which he might feel himself warranted so to do, it would require such constant watchfulness and steadiness of principle to resist, with effect, the consequences necessarily resulting from evil association, as to convince him that the best security for Christians is to leave such affairs to instruments better suited to the purpose than themselves. For we believe it to be a fact which cannot be disputed, that there have been but few men, professing Christianity, who have actively interfered in political affairs, without injury to their moral character.

Notwithstanding this, however, the Christian, possessing feelings in common with other men, and participating equally with others in the evil effects of vicious institutions, or the benefits resulting from those that are excellent, must, on his own account, even if on no other, feel deeply interested in the political circumstances of the country in

which he dwells; and, influenced by the benevolent spirit of his religion, must, more than any other man, feel deep commiseration for the sufferings of his fellow men—a strong sense of indignation at injustice and oppression; the most ardent wish that every corrupt institution may be annihilated; and that the wisest, most virtuous, and benevolent systems of government may be established throughout the world. Thus far, from his common feelings, common nature, and common circumstances, the disciple of Jesus will, of necessity, feel like other men in political concerns. But he has also views beyond these:—the enlightened principles of Revelation aid him in developing the vast plan of the divine government; teach him the important facts, that he who created light created darkness—he who created good also created evil; instruct him that every thing is so arranged by infinite wisdom and benevolence, as ultimately to produce the greatest sum of happiness of which our nature is capable; and *that* not to a few, but to all who have existed; and, giving him general and comprehensive views, render all partial impressions, as to political good or evil, comparatively insignificant and unworthy of being the objects of his anxious solicitude.

The mere worldly politician, when he sees his objects frustrated, and his expectations disappointed, is too frequently disposed to exclaim

“The ways of heaven are dark and intricate—
Puzzled with mazes and perplexed with errors;”

whilst the Christian, under similar circumstances, humbled beneath a sense of his own short-sightedness, yet full of confidence in Him who made and governs all things, rejoices in the glorious and consoling reflection that, “*the Lord God omnipotent reigneth;*” and rests firmly assured, although “*clouds and darkness may be about him,*” that “*judgment and justice are the bases of his throne;*” that he will, eventually, bring light out of darkness—good out of evil—and, finally, “*put down the oppressor, and cause oppression to cease.*” Amidst the darkness, confusion, and dismay with which others are surrounded, he, through the light afforded by Revelation, is enabled to see

“All discord harmony not understood—
All partial evil universal good.”

There never, perhaps, was a state of things so perplexing to the speculations of the philosopher and the politician, or

so distressing to the feelings of the benevolent philanthropist, as that in which the world it at present placed; the more so, as the pleasing expectation had been cherished that the general diffusion of light and knowledge had opened to our view the dawning day of liberty, peace, and happiness to the human race. By a sudden change of circumstances, however, all these sanguine expectations are disappointed, and our fondest hopes seem blasted. All the powers of Europe we see confederated and leagued together in one unholy alliance—one diabolical compact, for the purpose of restoring those vile chains of kingly and priestly tyranny, under which mankind so long had groaned and suffered; and from which, it had been fondly hoped, the time had arrived when they should be emancipated for ever.

To the philosopher and politician, unenlightened by Revelation, it must have ever appeared an inexplicable paradox, that a state of things, so apparently contrary to reason and philosophy, should have been permitted to prevail for so many ages; and it must appear still more extraordinary, that the same system should now seem likely to be restored and perpetuated; that the power, the riches, and honours of this world should, generally speaking, in the present as in former ages, be conferred on the most incapable and the most worthless; and that the world should be governed, enslaved, and oppressed by a few; and that few amongst the most ignorant, imbecile, and wicked of the human race. Independent of Revelation we must confess that the difficulties and objections to the plans of providence appear insuperable and unanswerable. Mr. Paine, indeed, says that we may learn every thing that is necessary or proper to be known of God (and by this he must, of course, mean of the government of God) from the Book of Creation. "Do we want" (he asks) "to contemplate his *wisdom*? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the whole is *governed*. Do we want to contemplate his *munificence*? We see it in the *abundance* with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his *mercy*? We see it in his not withholding that abundance from the *unthankful*." But Mr. Paine, to make his "*Book*" complete, should have added, what by no fair mode of argument can be excluded, the *moral* as well as the *physical* government of the Deity; and then, we ask, How would *his Book* have explained the mysteries of the Divine Government? To look at the present time, for example, judging, as he

necessarily must do (rejecting Revelation) from existing appearances, without any connected or well-established clue to their ultimate object and consequences—Where, we ask, can he discover the munificence—the wisdom—the mercy—or even the justice of God, in the moral government of the world, as it now appears? Might we not rather, in our turn, ask, Does the Deity, indeed, possess infinite power—and yet will not exert it to blast and destroy the oppressors of his creatures? Does he possess infinite wisdom—and yet permit a state of things to exist, so utterly at variance with, and irreconcilable to, every thing that wisdom can admire or comprehend? Is he munificent—righteously so—and yet does he bestow his abundance upon the most vile and contemptible of his creatures; whilst the wise and the virtuous share, comparatively, so little of his bounty? Is he merciful—and yet, with the power to prevent it if he please, does he suffer the great mass of mankind to labour under the extremes of misery and wretchedness, through the cruelty and oppression of those miscreants on whom he has so unsparingly showered down abundance? Is he just—and at the very moment when the minds of his creatures become comparatively enlightened, so as, in some degree, at least, to understand their rights—to appreciate their injuries—and to be, apparently, prepared to make every effort to shake off the galling chains, beneath which, through the instrumentality of civil and ecclesiastical tyrants, they have, for ages, writhed and suffered—at that very moment to permit those cruel tyrants to dash the cup of hope from their lips—to persecute, imprison, or destroy those noble spirits that risked their own lives, in an attempt to deliver *His* creatures, and *their* fellow men from oppression, and to promote the cause of virtue and happiness? Questions such as these this Book of Nature (“the Bible” of the Deist) cannot answer to our satisfaction; nor can it, under any circumstances, without the interpreting aid of Revelation, lead us to see, or believe, that every thing is under the government and direction of one infinitely wise, powerful, and benevolent Being. So far from it, this belief, whether we draw our conclusions from past experience, or from the present state of things, we should rather infer, as, indeed, has generally *been* inferred, that, at the best, the whole was under the government of two opposing powers or Deities: the one good and well-intentioned, but, comparatively, impotent; the other evil, cruel, and malignant, but triumphant in his designs, and, in fact, omnipotent: the former

seeking, but in vain, the happiness of created beings; the latter too successfully opposing his benign intentions; delighting in human degradation and misery, and scattering around, as it were for his sport and satisfaction, the arrows of death and the firebrands of destruction. From the Book of Nature we must either conclude this, or else that the whole was the mere effect of chance, and that it exists altogether without order, object, design, or government. How truly thankful, then, ought *we* to be, who are not left to this obscure and mysterious Book of Nature, in order to guide us through the mazy paths of perplexity and darkness; but, by the aid of the volume of Revelation, are enabled to trace the whole—to understand the mighty scheme—to see the plans of providence in their commencement—to trace them in their progress—and to perceive their ultimate accomplishment and destination. But in speaking thus figuratively of the volume of Revelation, as opposed to the volume of Nature, let it not be imagined that we fall into the common error of supposing that the Bible is, what it is generally termed, the “word of God;” that is, a book divinely inspired, and written, as it were, by the hand of God: on the contrary, it is evident that the volume now called the Bible was written without the aid of inspiration, by various men, at various times, and under the several different forms of history, poetry, prophecy, biography, letters, &c. Still, although not itself a Revelation, yet it contains a *history* of the successive Revelations which God has made to man; and, consequently, it is with *that* view that we now introduce the book. It contains, at once, the most enlightened and the most authentic views of the Divine Government, and of the designs and intentions of the Deity, throughout the whole. In this book, then, we learn that every thing is under his divine superintendence and direction; that what we call good and evil are only and equally his instruments to accomplish his wise and gracious purposes; that all which now, to our limited understanding, appears dark and mysterious, will, in the end, be made clear and intelligible; and that every event, however the mode of its operation may elude our present inquiry, is intended to promote, and will ultimately accomplish, the collective happiness of the whole human race. In this book the past and the present state of things, in the moral world, are represented as “*the mystery of God*”—it is, perhaps, beyond our finite comprehension; but we are also assured that it shall not always remain thus, but that “*the mystery*

"of God" shall be finished. "*I was envious*" (says the psalmist) "*at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked: when I sought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God then understood I their end.*" (Ps. 73.)

The powers, which have tyrannized over mankind, are, in the scriptures, uniformly described under the figure of Beasts:—beasts of prey, which shall ultimately be destroyed. The time, we are told, shall come when "*the thrones shall be cast down, and the dominion, and the greatness of the dominion, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High;*"—not to the hypocritical and canting saints of the present day; but to the truly wise, virtuous, and good—when "*he that killeth with the sword, shall be killed by the sword; he that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity;*" and this righteous retribution is called "*the faith and patience of the saints.*" To the present dark days of misery and oppression, shall succeed, we are assured, a period of joy, of peace, and righteous government; a new order of things, under which men "*shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and shall learn war no more; when every man shall sit down under his own vine, and his own fig tree, and none shall make him afraid.*" Why then all the cant, which we daily hear, of loyalty to legitimate monarchs, and devotion to established governments, when, according to those sacred writings—which the defenders of these men and their institutions, themselves profess to call the revealed word of God—he has doomed their ultimate destruction; and when they are represented in that book, under the semblance of wild and ravenous beasts, which, although endured by man, and tolerated by God, whilst the earth is in a savage and uncultivated state, yet have always, in the natural world, as the scriptures teach us to expect they will in the moral world, retreated and fled before the progress of civilization, knowledge, and true wisdom? Directed by this light, and supported by these hopes, the Christian is consoled in trouble—comforted in adversity—and enabled to look through those dark clouds, impenetrable to every other eye, which seem to cast trouble and uncertainty around. Lifting up his heart in love, admiration, and gratitude, to his heavenly Father, he is prepared to exclaim, with the poet,

"I cannot go
Where universal love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns,

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From *seeming evil* still educing good—
And *better* thence again, and *better* still,
In infinite progression."

The Bible, we have said, is a history of the Divine Government—of the dealings of God with his creature man; by means of the revelations therein described, which he has, at various times, made to him, he lifts up, as it were, the curtain, and gives us some insight into the vast machinery which would otherwise be impervious to our view. From what we there learn of his government, we may infer how he will act, with what views, and upon what principles, upon similar occasions, even in our own times. When Nebuchadnezzar was stricken with madness, we are told, in the scriptures, that it was as a punishment from God for his impiety and pride. When a king not a hundred years since, was stricken with a similar calamity, it was imputed, by the professors of religion, to natural causes; and the subject of it was almost idolized for his misfortune, and represented as the fit object of the deepest sympathy of his people. But if that king had, in fact, been a shedder of human blood—if he had proved himself an inveterate enemy to liberty, and bitterly hostile to the improvement and happiness of man—if he had joined himself with the oppressor, and used all his power to *support* what God had threatened to *destroy*—should we not, in such a case, from the example of scripture, be justified in pronouncing this, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, to be a visitation, arising from the righteous judgment of God? To give another instance:—Cyrus is declared to have been raised up by the Almighty, as an instrument to accomplish his purposes; whilst Napoleon was considered as a tyrant of his own creation, instead of being regarded as an instrument to fulfil the designs of Deity. But if we have reason to believe, as a study of the scriptures would lead us to do, that it is the same God who directs and governs all things now, as he did then, we must conclude that all these events stand precisely on the same ground, and admit of a similar interpretation.

To proceed further, we collect, from the scriptures, that the Deity, for the accomplishment of his wise purposes, and particularly in order to punish other guilty nations, raises some nations to great power, and bestows upon them important and distinguishing privileges; but that, when these have accomplished his purposes, and having become vain and lifted up, *abuse* their power and privileges, he, as suddenly, casts them down—exalting others to punish them in

their turn, and to shew their utter insignificance. This was his course in days of old; and, his government being still the same, may we not reasonably, and even necessarily, infer that he continues to direct the moral government of the world upon precisely the same principles, in the present day? That every nation, therefore, which has abused its privileges and its power, in enslaving others, will become subject to the same righteous retribution; and, in its turn, be enslaved, and finally destroyed from the face of the earth? If this be the just inference, what, it may be asked, are we to expect will be the fate of our own country—blest as we have been, above all the nations of the earth, with light, with liberty, and prosperity:—whilst it is a fact, too palpable to be denied, that we have corrupted, oppressed, and enslaved every other people, over whom we have gained dominion—and, when it is equally a fact, that, for the last quarter of a century, we have been openly leagued with despots, civil and ecclesiastical, in order to destroy the rising liberties of mankind; to preserve or restore the despotism of kings and priests; to re-establish the *holy* inquisition; and above all, to maintain the power of antichrist, of the city set upon seven hills, against which, also, and equally against all those who openly or covertly espouse her cause, the Deity has, unequivocally, denounced punishment and destruction—if we, as a nation, have done these things, making ourselves parties, and active parties too, with the corrupters and oppressors of mankind, what excuse have we? Or what plea can we put in, that we should escape the righteous judgment of God—or that we should not rather expect even a more signal and dreadful retribution in our turn? The least that we could look for being that we should be enslaved and manacled with those same chains which we have so eagerly endeavoured to cast around, and to rivet on others. Much do we fear, indeed, that this must be eventually our lot; and that, too late, we shall find, with Macbeth, that

“In these cases

We still have judgment *here*. That we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague the inventor. Even-handed Justice
 Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice,
 To our own lips.”

May our fears prove groundless! May our beloved country, before it be too late, see its error; and, like Nineveh of old, repent in sackcloth and ashes! May it, like that wicked and devoted city, “*cry mightily unto God*

"and turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is on their heads; for who can tell but that God will turn from his fierce anger, and ye perish not?" If, fellow-countrymen! ye thus act, the same God, who, in his mercy, spared Nineveh, may also spare you; but, if ye persist in the iniquity of your doings, then slavery and destruction, as a righteous retribution, must inevitably be your lot!

We have been thus diffuse and general in our preliminary remarks, because this Review is not intended to record merely the passing events of the day, which any one may gather from the daily newspapers—nor yet written with a view merely to the present times: our objects being to mark the signs of the times, in order to enable the Christian properly to estimate the period in which he lives; to point out the tendency of different events, as elucidating the plans of the Divine Government, in the destruction of all antichristian power; and in preparing for the approach of that glorious kingdom of peace and righteousness, which God has promised to set up, in the latter days, upon the vast and mighty ruins of all those beast-like powers, that have so long ruled over, and oppressed, the children of men. If we, at this time, cast our eyes over Europe, the prospect is truly appalling: society seems reverting back to the darkness of the middle ages, when kings and priests were every thing, and the people nothing. Two questions naturally arise from this survey. Is man for ever destined to be the sport and prey of perjured kings and blood-thirsty, avaricious priests? Are there no means by which we can pierce through the dark clouds of ignorance, oppression, and cruelty—by which the world is now surrounded? It is to the Bible alone that we can look for an explanation of these difficulties; the prophetic parts of that volume foretell all the events of striking importance, which are to take place in the world, previous to the establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah. We know, indeed, that much doubt has been thrown on this hypothesis, by the many mistaken views which the interpreters of prophecy have taken on the subject; but this, we feel, ought not to discourage future inquiries, which, if judiciously conducted may be important in themselves, and valuable in their application. A respected friend of ours, who has paid considerable attention to the subject of prophecy, has furnished us with some observations, which, whilst not absolutely adopting them as our own, we shall insert, because they appear to us to be both

ingenious and plausible. There can be little doubt, says our friend, but that modern commentators have been perfectly correct in applying that part of the book of Revelations to France, wherein it is said "*and the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and in the earthquake there were slain of men*" (or, as it should be translated, names of men) "*seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*" (Rev. xi. 13.) This application of the passage receives considerable support from the circumstance, that most of the men who have written on the subject, however various might be their views on other matters, have agreed in this: some have even predicted the time of its fulfilment a century before the event itself took place.

Dr. Goodwin, in 1639, applies the "*tenth part of the city*" to France, saying, that "*this figurative earthquake, though happening only in one country, may extend its effect to others, so that a great shaking of states, as well political as ecclesiastic, may be intended.*"* Jurieu, a Frenchman, in a work published in 1686, says, "*Now what is this tenth part of this city? In my opinion we cannot doubt but that it is France.*" And Mr. Fleming, who wrote in the year 1701, predicts that "*before the year 1794, some great event would happen in France;*" and, "*that the French monarchy, after it had scorched others, will itself consume by doing so.*" With this view of the case, it would appear to follow that the mistakes which have been made, as to the detail of this subject, do not affect its general applicability to that event—so important in itself, and in its consequences—the French Revolution. One of the chief mistakes which has been made, has consisted in a misunderstanding of the immediately succeeding passage, (verse 14.) "*The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.*" It having been inferred that the French Revolution had been completed at the time of the destruction of the monarchy, aristocracy, and priesthood; and that another succeeding "*woe*" was now immediately to follow. But this arises from an ignorance of prophetic language; a series of events being regarded as completed, even at their very commencement, on the ground that, God having begun the work, the end is certain. The greatness of the event too, and the sanguine wishes of many individuals, led them to overlook several

* See Illustrations of Prophecy—Vol. I. p. 92.—London, 1706.

very important points, connected with the subject. First, they have confined the effects of the earthquake to France, and supposed them to end in the Revolution which took place in that country; whereas an earthquake is not confined to the place where it begins; nor can it be considered as over, whilst any of its undulations continue. This being the case, we must refer all those changes and revolutionary movements, which have agitated, or continue to agitate, Naples, Italy, Spain, Greece, South America, and other parts of the world, to that earthquake, and regard them as forming a part of the same. Secondly, they have supposed the earthquake would, at once, completely destroy the French monarchy and its dignitaries; whereas it appears only to have indicated the destruction of a portion of them, and the shaking the foundation of the whole. Nor, as we have observed, are its effects confined to France; though beginning there, its undulations extend to all the ten kingdoms of the Beast; or, the whole of that part of Europe which constituted the Western Roman Empire, or antichrist, among which the French Revolution occasioned the actual destruction of many titles and dignities, and shook the foundation of them all. Thirdly, commentators have taken it for granted that the early events of the Revolution in France, formed the *end* of "*the second woe*;" whereas there are *two* important events that must take place before the conclusion of that woe; which, at that time, were not accomplished, but which have since been most remarkably so. Thus, for instance, it is said, at the conclusion of the verse, "*and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*" This remnant was supposed to mean the emigrant nobility, and the priests, who escaped that destruction which, in this instance, fell upon the dignitaries in church and state. But this may be shewn to be too limited an application of the passage. The earthquake, though beginning in France, ("*the tenth part of the city*") is yet described as extending itself through the *whole* of "that great city—*Babylon.*" This remnant, therefore, must mean all those titled mortals, not in France merely, but throughout Europe, who escaped destruction from the effects of the Revolution. Till the end of the revolutionary war, however, there is no instance recorded, of their doing any thing which could, as a public event, be denominated "*giving glory to the God of heaven.*" Nor could, indeed, the remnant, with propriety, be ascertained or designated, till the revolutionary war had ceased. Immediately after its conclusion, we have a most

extraordinary fulfilment of this prophecy, in the establishment of THE HOLY ALLIANCE—a union of the monarchs of Europe—evidently resulting from the affright and alarm they had experienced at the events and principles of the French Revolution: under these salutary feelings of terror, they appear disposed to “*give glory to God*,” how far they were, however, from real repentance, and how little disposed to submit to the righteous government of God, and to take warning from the first manifestation of his wrath, may be testified by a reference to the treaty upon which this *Holy Alliance* is founded; and particularly by a reference to the *acts* by which that alliance has been distinguished. It may be curious, at this time, to refer the reader back to an *ukase* or edict of one of the most potent of these monarchs, announcing the establishment of this alliance.

“By the Grace of God, We, Alexander the First, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russians, &c. hereby make known:—As we have seen, from *experience*, and from the unhappy consequences that have resulted to the whole world, that the course of the political relations in Europe, between the Powers, has not been founded on those true principles upon which the wisdom of God, in his Revelations, has founded the peace and prosperity of nations.

“We have, consequently, in conjunction with their Majesties, the Emperor of Austria, Francis the First, and the King of Prussia, Frederick William, proceeded to form an alliance between us, (to which the other *Christian Powers* are invited to accede) in which we reciprocally engage, both between ourselves and in respect of our subjects, to adopt, as the sole means to attain this end, the principles drawn from the words and doctrine of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who preaches not to live in *enmity and hatred*, but in *peace and love*. We hope and implore the blessing of the Most High. May this *sacred* union be confirmed between all the powers, for their general good; and, deterred by the union of all the rest, may no one dare to fall off from it. We accordingly subjoin a copy of this union, ordering it to be made generally known, and read in all the churches.

“ALEXANDER.”

“St. Petersburg, on the day of the birth of the Saviour, 25th Dec. 1812.”

[*The original is signed by his Imperial Majesty's own hand.*]

How far these anti-christian princes have shewn their sincerity, or acted up to their professed principles of *peace and love*, let Naples—let Sardinia—let France, &c. demonstrate.

It is, we may observe in passing, a remarkable fact, and worthy of being held in remembrance, that there has scarcely ever existed an institution or combination, directed against the liberties and happiness of man, that has not assumed the title of *holy*. Thus we have his *holiness* the pope! the *holy* catholic church! the *holy* crusades! the *holy* inquisition! the *holy* Order of Jesuits! and last, though not the least in iniquity, the *Holy Alliance*!—Impious blasphemy! Cruel mockery! Are there no thunderbolts in the stores of

heaven, to blast these men, who, not content with building their greatness on oppression and misery, use *religion* as a cloak for their designs—preach *peace and love*, in order to establish discord and confusion—and call themselves *holy*, the more effectually to aid their *unholy* and impious machinations! With great propriety do the scriptures represent such men, and such institutions, under the figure of wild beasts! It has been said, however, that there is another event, which must take place before the *second woe* is ended; which event is described as being the rising up of another Beast, which should, in part, *restore* the governments that had been shaken; and make an image to the Beast which had been wounded indeed, but not destroyed; though that Beast must wholly cease to exist before the sounding of the *seventh trumpet*, and the opening of the *third woe*, under which the seven vials of the wrath of God are to be poured out without mixture—when not only the first Beast, and its image, but all who have, directly or indirectly, given their support to either will be destroyed. (See Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.)

Let us now, therefore, see whether recent events justify us in supposing that this part of the prophecy is fulfilled, or began to be fulfilled; for, at the conclusion of this, we may expect the commencement of the third woe, which is to be the harbinger of more dreadful calamities to Europe, the kingdom of the Beast, than any that has before been experienced, though it will end in the destruction of all the tyrannical powers, and introduce a system of righteous government, denominated the kingdom of God and his Christ.

Revelations xiii. 11, begins by saying “*And I beheld another Beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns, like a lamb; and he spake as a dragon.*” In the symbolical language of this book, a Beast always denotes tyrannical government; the sea—the tumult and commotions of nations; the heavens—the supreme powers, civil or ecclesiastical; the earth—the common people—whilst a horn is the emblem of power. With the aid of these brief explications, it has been suggested that we can find the clear explanation of this prophecy. The Beast here spoken of, which did not exist at the time of the French Revolution, but evidently rose out of it, may be taken as fulfilled in the “*Holy Alliance;*” it came up out of the earth—that is, it originally derived its power from the common people. It is well known that the monarchs, members of this alliance, were all at the mercy of France, and must have still con-

tinued subject to the influence of that power, but for the people; who—roused by their own sufferings, and by the delusive hopes held out by the sovereigns of ameliorating their condition; and their promises of political constitutions, if they would come forth, and support their thrones—saved them from ruin, and raised them to that power which they now so wickedly abuse. Thus, then, we see that the *Holy Alliance* arose out of the earth. But “*it has two horns like a lamb.*” The power it exercised was founded on the profession it made, of having only for its object the cause of liberty and social order. In all its proclamations, from 1813 to 1815, it appeared, indeed, like a lamb; but the event has proved that it was a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Though it bore at first, indeed, the harmless “*horns of the lamb,*” it now speaks terrifically “*like a dragon.*” Notwithstanding its peaceable profession, and its often repeated promises to govern by the principles of the gospel, no sooner does any nation attempt to reform its institutions, and make them approximate, however remotely, to those very principles, than forth starts this Beast of prey from its den, and, under the most peaceable profession, speaks, indeed, in its conduct, like a dragon. This, in the past, the conduct of the *Holy Alliance* towards Naples, in France, &c. may sufficiently testify; whilst their conduct, in the Congress at Verona, for the purpose of crushing the newly-established liberties of Spain and of Portugal, shews them still determined to act upon the same principles. Thus far, it would appear, that the picture is complete, and every feature of the prophecy applicable. In verse 12, it is said of this second Beast, “*and he exerciseth all the power of the first Beast, before him,*” (that is, universal dominion) “*and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first Beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*” The two following verses appear, to the inquirer, to be merely an amplification of the same chain of circumstances; thus in the fourteenth verse, the prophecy says “*and (he) deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by those miracles which he had power to do, in the sight of the Beast; saying to them that they should make AN IMAGE to the Beast WHICH HAD THE WOUND BY A SWORD, AND DID LIVE.*” This part appears to predict that this Beast (the *Holy Alliance*) should, by the extraordinary power it possesses, be able to compel the different nations to pay obedience to what remained of the oppressive power of their different beast-like governments, which, although wounded by the sword of revolution, yet lived. The various treaties they have entered into, for the

purpose of supporting what they call the sacred compact, and the security of thrones, sufficiently explain this part of the prophecy. (See Ps. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4.)

But they are also to command that *an image be made to the Beast*, somewhat resembling the late tyrannical government, which had been nearly, but not wholly, destroyed by the sword of France. Is not this, it may be asked, most literally and lamentably fulfilled; in the commands issued by the Holy Alliance, to every nation that has changed, or attempted to change, its system of government, that they should renounce such immediately, and restore the ancient *régime*; threatening that, in the event of disobedience to their *holy* command, they would destroy their country by fire and sword? Did they not retain their combined armies in France, till such an image of the Beast was made and set up? Is not Naples and Sardinia, occupied by their troops, till such an order of things be re-established? And have they not, at this very time, met at Verona, in order to issue their decrees to the people of Spain and Portugal, that they shall abolish their free constitutions, and, by restoring "*the absolute king*," and the power of the priests, make "*an image to the Beast*" in its stead? Is it not, also, a most striking and remarkable circumstance, that in those countries where this image of the Beast is already erected, it could not sustain itself for a day or a month, but for the assistance of some external power. The next verse (the 15th) clears up this difficulty; for we there read that "*he*" (the Beast, or Holy Alliance) "*had power*," not only to cause the image to be made, but, "*to give life unto the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed.*" In illustration of this we have been referred to the recent conduct of France towards Spain, and the kind of interference exercised by the *Holy Alliance* on this subject; an interference which has been well described in the official journal of the French government, the *Moniteur*. "After the indecision which so many opposite opinions must have every where produced, we should find a solid basis for new conjectures, in the assurance, that France has occupied, at the congress of Verona, the place which belongs to her among the monarchies of Europe; and that the continental powers leave to her the end and termination of the affairs of Spain, with the intention of concurring with all their force in such plans of execution as France shall be in a situation to adopt." Here we see this second Beast (the *Holy Alliance*) exercising

all the powers of the first Beast; receiving into, or rejecting from, the monarchical association every nation, according as they do or do not erect an image to the Beast, by the restoration of their former tyrannies. France, listening to their bidding, *has done this*; she is, therefore, admitted into her place at the congress of Verona; and this *Holy Alliance*, has *given her leave* to act against Spain at her good pleasure. Weak, distracted, and powerless in itself, her present government only derives *life* from this *holy* association; it is they who cause and enable her to *speak*; and it will be by the aid of their permission and assistance, giving to her "*the place which belongs to her among the monarchies of Europe*," that she will be enabled to pursue to destruction those who oppose her, probably succeeding in restoring the ancient despotism of Spain, thus "*causing that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed*." Thus, according to this prophecy, may they go on, till the whole of Europe shall have adopted one common system of oppression and of priestcraft, thereby making their governments an image of that Beast, *which had had a wound by the sword*, indeed, but which still *did live*. Many may suppose that England will be excepted, but there would appear ground for a contrary opinion. There are many causes operating to impoverish this country; to break its proud spirit, and induce it patiently to submit to a military despotism. There can be very little doubt, but that the Alien Bill in time of peace, and many other restrictions laid on the liberties of this country, by Castlereagh and his coadjutors, were in compliance with the suggestions or dictation of the *Holy Alliance*, and with a view to the ultimately enslaving this nation; when, after we too have made our government an image of the Beast, we may be regarded as, like France, fitted to "*take the place which belongs to us, among the monarchies of Europe*." This is a fearful prospect! Let us hope then that this dreadful state of things may not be of long duration. With a view to the ascertaining this point, let us see if in this prophecy there be any clue, by which we may discover the duration of the woe in question. In the 18th verse it is said, "*Here is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number*" (or say the duration) "*of the Beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number*" (duration) "*is six hundred three score and six*." When events foretold have had their fulfilment we have the evidence of facts; but before that time we must exercise our judgment, and from the most reasonable conjectures, leaving it to time to refute or establish our opinion.

Our friend hazards a conjecture in explanation of this verse, suggesting that the number of the Beast describes the time it shall have existence; and that its being the number of a man implies that its existence shall depend upon the life of one man, at whose death it also shall expire. It remains then to ascertain what space of time is designed, and it has been suggested that 666 weeks are intended; which, from the date of the commencement of the *Holy Alliance* will expire between October and December 1828. Daubitz, a celebrated writer on prophecy, says, that "*the terms of days and years must be determined by the circumstances and intent of the writer;*" and again, that they "*may, in the symbolic style, signify any portion of time, provided it is a fixed period.*" Now a week evidently is a fixed period, and it may be argued, that we are justified in considering the number as denoting *weeks* only, because it is not in the nature of things that such a combination of tyrants could longer exist; the wonder, indeed, being that it should exist so long: and this opinion is further strengthened by an immediately succeeding passage, (ch. 15, v. 2) where the writer, describing more happy times, sees, as "*standing on a sea of glass,*" those that had "*gotten the victory over the Beast, and her image, and over the number of his name;*" that is, who had not only outlived the duration of the second Beast, who is not even here mentioned, it having been long extinct, but who had also overcome every other beastly power with all their appendages. That the *Holy Alliance* depends for its prosperity, and even for its existence, upon *one* man no one can entertain a doubt; that man is the Emperor Alexander—the head and support of this beast-like association: and as, in a despotic government, like that of Russia, every thing depends on the will of the reigning despot, nothing is more probable, than that his successor would adopt a new line of policy, and dissolve this *Holy Alliance*; the breaking up of which might then be considered as terminating the "*second woe.*" This alliance arose out of the French revolution—it is the last dreadful undulation of that earthquake which shook the world; when it has ceased, at length, "*Behold the third woe cometh quickly.*" It is, at any rate, probable, that, whenever the *Holy Alliance* is broken up, the concealed jealousies, the smothered sense of injuries, the latent ambitions of the various powers and governments of which it is composed, will break out with the greater force from having been so long repressed; and that wars will occur of the most sanguinary nature, between the formerly allied monarchs, whose

enmity against each other will be the more furious because so long concealed. Thus it is highly probable, that when those nations who have been so long enslaved by this oppressive Beast, see its images, or members, thus engaged in conflict with each other, they will make a fresh struggle to throw off the fetters of despotism, and then revolutions throughout Europe may be the inevitable result. This, it is said, appears to be the natural consequence of the breaking up of the *Holy Alliance*. What follows we need not now attempt to enlarge upon. Under the third woe, or seventh trumpet, will, it is represented, take place "*the pouring out of the seven vials*," which are indicative of more severe calamities, than have ever before been experienced by man; calamities which, in this account, are emphatically called "*vials of the wrath of God*." Babylon the Great is then finally brought to judgment before God, and her destruction determined on; thereby finishing what, to the understanding of short-sighted mortals, is called "*the mystery of God*," by destroying those who had destroyed the earth, and by the introduction of a system of everlasting peace and universal benevolence—a state of things wherein will be fulfilled the words uttered "*by the great voices in heaven*," which were heard by the writer of the *Apocalypse* exclaiming "*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Messiah, and he shall reign for ever and ever*."

Thus far the suggestions of our friend; which, however various may be the opinions entertained as to the application of prophecy, we do not hesitate strongly to recommend to the serious consideration of the Christian: if mistaken in the appropriation of individual passages to particular facts—or if deemed so by our readers—the principles and general line of argument here suggested cannot, if properly attended to, but prove beneficial.

Again, before concluding, we would observe, that our object in this *Review*, is not merely to record the passing events of the day; but, if possible, to discover and convey to the Christian every circumstance that marks the directing finger of God in the government of the world; to shew how he ought to deport himself, lest he join in supporting what God has determined to destroy; and that thus seeing the work to be of God, he may feel his mind at ease under the most perplexing circumstances, well knowing that his interest is in "*the Master of the storm*," and confiding and rejoicing in the thought that though impiety and

oppression may, for wise objects, be for a time permitted yet that the "*Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*"

This being our object, we have given these free remarks in our first Essay, rather as materials for thinking than as having any express view to the explaining of prophecy, according to any peculiar views of our own; our object being to find some clue, as it were, by which to guide our steps, when all besides are lost or bewildered;—some point to which we may direct our aim; some principle by which we may try men as they appear, and compare events as they arise; something, in short, which may support and comfort—by inducing within us a firm reliance upon our heavenly Father—whose awful judgments are now so visibly displayed upon the earth; and by means of which we may learn to put our trust and confidence in Him alone—attending to the emphatic exhortations of the prophet, and never surely were they more directly applicable. (Jer. ix. 23, 24) "*Thus saith the Lord: let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in THIS, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord, which exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*"

December 5, 1822.

CHURCH AND STATE.

It is now a well-known position, laid down by the judges, that Christianity is "*part and parcel of the law of the land.*" Jesus, were he again alive, amid lawyers and parsons, judges and bishops, patrons and placemen, peers and princes, admirals and generals, kings and emperors, all of whom are "*parts and parcels*" of his church, could no longer say, "*My kingdom is not of this world.*"

"*The Sketch-book, by Geoffry Crayon,*" thus describes one of John Bull's families at his parish church. "The old gentleman was the only one really attentive to the service. He took the whole burthen of family devotion upon himself; standing bolt upright and uttering the responses with a loud voice that might be heard all over the church. It was evident that he was one of those thorough church and king men, who connect the idea of devotion and loyalty; who consider the Deity some how or other of the government party, and religion '*a very excellent sort of thing that ought to be countenanced and kept up.*'"

DEO ET CAROLO is the dedicatory inscription of a pile of alms-houses situated on Richmond Hill—"TO GOD AND CHARLES" the Second!

"FOR GOD, THE KING, AND THE PEOPLE!" is the absurd and blasphemous motto lately taken by a weekly newspaper remarkable for its scurrility, and its want of every correct principle.

LINES ADDRESSED TO THE CONDUCTORS OF THE FREE-
THINKING CHRISTIANS' REGISTER.

Is there a cause, to which the grateful heart
 Would all its noblest energy impart;
 For whose success its highest wish would rise,
 And every throb beat full in sacrifice?
 There is! The sacred cause of Christian Truth
 Inspires the breast with all the warmth of youth:
 Calls forth the thought, mature in vigour's prime;
 Bids meekness lift its eye to deeds sublime;
 Zeal's ardent impulse animates with love,
 And prompts the deeds which knowledge must approve.
 Whilst Infidelity, with murky wing,
 Broods o'er the abyss, which no pellucid spring
 (Brightened by sacred wisdom's radiant gleam)
 E'er or refines, or cheers, with crystal stream;
 While Priestcraft levels with the senseless clod—
 The noblest work of the Creator—God;
 Enslaves the mind to hold its despot sway,
 And guards its throne from free-inquiry's ray
 By Persecution's frown and flaming sword—
 The vengeful sceptre of the self-made *Lord*;
 Whilst error, void of truth's divine impress,
 Boldly assumes her name in guiseful dress;—
 Despoils her beauty with deceitful show,
 And wounds her honour with a secret blow.
 Champions of truth—and friends of human kind!
 We hail your labours with enraptured mind.
 Arrayed in all the armour truth bestows,
 We hail your triumphs o'er her deadliest foes!
 No flaming pile shall mark your conquering way—
 No blood-stained sword bespeak the victor's sway—
 No human laws shall subjugate the mind—
 No compromise the mental vision blind—
 No double sense, or double tongue betray
 The young inquirer from "the narrow way;"
 No hollow candour leagued in virtue's cause,
 The base contemner of her holy laws;
 No interest blend with Jesus' heavenly throne,
 The baneful influence of an earthly one;

Nor all the pomp which glares at Mammon's shrine,
 Be deemed an offering, or a rite divine.
 Though faithful, mild; and candid, though severe;
 By reason strong—and testimony clear—
 Deceit no robe—hypocrisy no shade—
 Priestcraft shall ne'er the beams of truth evade;
 Prevarication shall confess the smart,
 Which just exposure fixes in her heart;
 And mystery's self retire, abashed to see
 Fair truth arrayed in bright simplicity.
 O glorious cause!—true weal of human kind—
 'Tis thine to raise and dignify the mind—
 To guide the passions 'midst the jarring strife—
 The trials, troubles, wants, and cares of life;
 To point the path where virtue's summits rise—
 Sprung from the earth—but pointing to the skies;
 To bind the sons of men in social love,
 And all the bliss of pure religion prove.
 May He whose wisdom rules this vast machine—
 Guides every movement with a hand unseen—
 From whom all being and all power have flowed—
 Whose love the gracious means of bliss bestowed—
 Deign all your labours to approve and bless,
 And crown your heartfelt wishes with success!

CRANBROOK, Dec. 10, 1822.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NOTICES.—WE have received, signed J. N., "*An Answer to the Question, 'Why are you an ATHEIST?'*" It appears temperately and well written. J. N. however appearing fully aware of the danger of circulating atheistical speculations, prudently enough wishes to transfer to us the responsibility of publishing his views. This, in our opinion, is not the age in which any inquiries, however bold, ought to be suppressed. If, on re-perusal, it appears we can do it with safety, we shall probably insert the letter of J. N.; which, with the suppressed poem of *Queen Mab*, may afford us materials for an article in reply—on the Being and Attributes of a God.

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY, and the best means of obtaining relief to dissenters from the oppressive effects of the existing law on that subject, will have our early attention.

Simple unlaboured POETRY, communicating to moral and religious subjects a greater force and interest than can be imparted by any other species of composition, is always to our taste—such is the first part of "*THE YEAR*," furnished by our correspondent. A poem possessing all the feeling, piety, and moral discrimination, of Cowper's "*TASK*," divested of its orthodoxy, may be esteemed a desideratum by the friends of rational Christianity; let us hope, then, that our correspondent's poetic labours may be directed to this end. The "*Consistent Character*," and the "*Inconsistent Character*," are, certainly, excellent subjects for his Muse; there is, however, a higher character for poetic description, which we shall venture to recommend as suited to "*THE YEAR*"—"*The Religious APOSTATE*"—and for this, we think we might furnish some hints to our friend.

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THE
FREETHINKING
CHRISTIANS'
QUARTERLY REGISTER.

ON RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.—ESSAY II.

“What is man?
Where must he find his Maker? with what rites
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?
Or does he sit regardless of his works?
—’Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts.”—*Cowper’s Task, Book II.*

THE object of the present Essay is to take a review of the modes of religious worship, as commanded or authorized by Deity, and which are alluded to as such in the scriptures; contrasting these with the various corruptions and unauthorized species of worship, which, whether from ignorance, interest, or false views of expediency, have been adopted by mankind, under the name of Christian.

As best fitted for such a review I shall adopt the mode of plain narration; reserving, for future Essays, all argument upon any points of difference which may arise. A statement made by any individual, whose intentions are fair and honest, must necessarily square with his own views and opinions. If the reader, however, should think any assertion hereinafter contained untenable, I can only request him, in fairness, to suspend his judgment till he shall have seen, in the after remarks, how far such assertions are, or are not, supported by sound argument, or borne out by sufficient authority.

To proceed then to the subject. When the Deity placed our first parent in the garden he had prepared for him, the earliest lesson which we have recorded, was a command—

which he disobeyed. In the infancy of his intellect it would have been vain to look for that implicit confidence in the will of his great Maker, which ages of experience have not produced on the minds of his distant offspring. The lesson taught, therefore, was not by means of any abstract, theoretical principle which he could not have understood, but by a direction which, bearing reference to his daily food, was brought down to the level of his capacity, and appealed to his feelings and his wants.

It is evident indeed that every appeal to the understanding must, in the first instance, be made *through the medium of the senses*: a principle which will be found to elucidate nearly all the modes, recorded in the scriptures, of early religious worship.

Of the sons of Adam the elder was a tiller of the ground, and the next born a keeper of sheep. Their worship was natural, and adapted, at once, to their capacities and circumstances. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground; Abel brought of the firstlings of the flock; and each made his offering to the Lord.

In an age immediately succeeding we are told that men first began to *call upon the name*, or to *call themselves by the name of the Lord*; the altar is erected, and we have frequent instances recorded of sacrifice and burnt offering. Thus of Noah we read that he built an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings on the altar, and that the Lord accepted his sacrifice, and blessed Noah and his sons. (Gen. viii. 20.)

On the subject of SACRIFICE various opinions have been entertained. There were evidently, indeed, sacrifices of different descriptions; some, as we have seen, were offerings presented to the Deity, in acknowledgment of his greatness and power, it being peculiarly the custom of eastern countries to express respect and obedience to superiors, by offerings and presents; in some cases the thing devoted—that is, made sacred, or sacrificed—was consumed by fire; emblematical, it may be, of the intention of the party to purify himself from sin, and lead, thenceforward, a life of virtue. Sacrifices, in after ages, were instituted at stated times, for the purpose of celebrating important events; and, in many cases, the thing offered or devoted, was eaten with rejoicing and thanksgiving—the sacrifice thus becoming, in fact, a feast. This has been, somewhat quaintly perhaps, but correctly, described by Dr. Sykes, as “*a kind of eating and drinking with God, as it*

"were at his table, in consequence of being in a state of friendship with him, by repentance and confession of sin."*

One general remark may be made, that it was never the death or the sufferings of the thing offered that constituted the essence of the sacrifice; in many cases, indeed, the object devoted was inanimate, and therefore incapable of pain or death. The piety or religious efficacy of sacrifice rested in the *mind* of the individual who made the offering, not in any innate virtue possessed by the first fruits of the earth, or by the blood of bulls, or goats, or rams.

Covenants, or as it were conditional agreements, are afterwards described as being made by Deity with Abraham and his descendants, throughout what are called—THE PATRIARCHAL AGES. Their simple and primitive views of the Deity, and of religious worship, are such as might have been expected from the people of an early, an ignorant, and an unenlightened period. Their compacts with Jehovah are made in the same form as agreements amongst each other; their reverence is manifested by the same tokens as marked their respect for the great men of the earth. *"If God will be with me, and keep me in this way which I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I may come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God."*† Such was the language of Jacob; and *"he set up the stone"* on which his head had rested, as a pillar which should be God's house, or a visible token of the undertaking he had given.

This was then considered as a religious compact, or covenant; but what Jacob, in this instance, did before God, was, as we find on another occasion, equally the token of a covenant between him and his fellow creature. His father-in-law, Laban, says *"Come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee; and Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar; and Jacob said unto his brethren, gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap, and they did eat there upon the heap; and Laban said, this heap is a witness between me and thee this day."*‡

* In some of the passages of the Old Testament, a doubt evidently remained in the minds of the translators of our received version, whether a feast or a sacrifice were intended. Compare the text with the marginal readings—Gen. xxxi. 54; 1 Sam. ix. 12. See also Exod. xviii. 12.

† Gen. xxviii. 20.

‡ Gen. xxxi. 44.

On another occasion (Gen. xxxv. 9) we are told that God appeared unto Jacob again, and blessed him; and said “*The land which I gave unto Abraham and Isaac will I give unto thee; and to thy children after thee will I give the land.*” Then also Jacob “*set up a pillar in the place where God talked with him—even a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon; and Jacob called the place where God spake unto him Beth-el, the house of God.*” (See also Jos. iv. 9.)

This spirit of external observance, not confined to religious matters, appears to have been extended to all the occurrences of political, and even of domestic life. It remains, more or less, even to this day, the prevailing characteristic of all the oriental nations, except where it has been superseded by the introduction of European habits; and it was, besides, the natural offspring of that early age of society.

The MOSAIC INSTITUTIONS were naturally—wisely—inevitably indeed—accommodated to this spirit. They suited, in their external forms, the age in which they were given, or they never could have gained the objects for which they were intended. Still, however, those favoured individuals who received direct communications from the Deity, and all who entered into the true spirit of his worship, appear, from the very earliest age, to have entertained but a mean idea of the intrinsic value of forms and ceremonies—of sacrifice and outward ordinances. These were indeed, probably, at the time, given with an *avowed* view to the ignorance, the prejudices, and even the superstition of the people; or, to use the words of Jesus on a similar subject, “*because of the hardness of their hearts.*” One of their prophets (Ezek. xx. 11, &c.) in describing the dispensations of the Deity toward the children of Israel, represents him as first “*giving them statutes, and shewing them his judgments; which, if a man do, he should even live in them.*” and then, with a view to their own peculiar and national circumstances, as afterwards “*giving them his sabbaths, to be a sign between him and them, that they might know that he was the Lord that blessed them.*” whilst at once the subordinate nature, and the *after* institution of the forms of their religious worship, are equally asserted by the prophet Jeremiah; (Ch. vii. 21—23) who expressly affirms that burnt offerings and sacrifices were *not*, at first, commanded their fathers, when they left the land of Egypt; the earlier direction of the Deity simply being,

that they should "*obey his voice, and walk in the way that he had commanded them.*" Principles, or statutes, like these last, were, however, too pure for the practice; and too abstract and mental for the comprehension of an early, yet corrupted, stage of society. The nations around them were plunged in ignorance, superstition, and idolatry: the children of Abraham had themselves been degraded by slavery, and contaminated by the example of their Egyptian masters. Habituated to the errors of polytheism, it was only by a visible and constant interposition of the power of Jehovah, that they were called originally to the worship of the true God; accustomed to behold the imposing, enticing, and even sensual observances of an idolatrous worship, it was only by a substitution of forms and ceremonies, purified from grossness, and adapted, in some degree, to the attributes and character of Jehovah, that their ignorant and wavering minds, constantly prone to excess and idolatry, were retained in an obedience to his commandments, and an attention to his will.

To these ends all the institutions of Moses were directed; every public form had its object—every peculiar ceremony its design. The sabbath, or day of rest, (in a great measure a political institution) was intended constantly to remind them that the God whom they worshipped was, at once, the creator of heaven and earth and the founder of their nation, by their deliverance from the slavery of the Egyptians. Their offerings and sacrifices, morning and evening, and on every great occasion, bespoke the presence of that supreme, benevolent being, from whom they derived every blessing.* At the feast of the passover, when their children, in time to come, said "*what is this?*" the answer they were instructed to give, was "*It is the Lord's passover; for by the strength of his hand brought he us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*"† "*Hear, O Israel!*" is the expressive language of Moses, "*the Lord our God is one Lord. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates,*" (Deut. vi. 4.)

* See Lev. xvi. 29; xxiii. 10—43, and many other places. † Ex. xiii. 14.

The Israelites believed themselves in the sight of God "a peculiar treasure above all people;" (Ex. xix. 5) for though "all the earth was the Lord's," yet they "were unto him as a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Jehovah was, in fact, regarded by them as, at once, their God, and their king, or temporal ruler. The cause which was too hard for them, they brought, by express permission, before the Lord. Under the pressure of national calamity—suffering from famine; from drought; from the effects of sin in the rulers or the people; or from fear of the swords of their enemies—they assembled as a nation, with a common feeling, to implore the pardon, or solicit the protection, of their monarch.

The *tabernacle* was regarded as holy, and to be approached with reverence, because Jehovah was there peculiarly present to his people; his seat was "*the mercy seat*," and his dwelling place, "*between the cherubim*."

Their *temple* (in which the ark and tabernacle were deposited) was regarded as the house—the residence—the palace of their king, and their God. The priests were his attendants, or courtiers; the levites, his officers or servants, sang his praises there continually. The sacrifices were, in fact, offerings at the footstool of the throne of their monarch; the people from all the distant parts of his dominion assembled there, three times in every year, to worship him, by acknowledging his presence, and bowing before his *visible* throne.

As the peculiar residence of their God, this temple was emphatically called "*the house of prayer*:"—of individual prayer, or petition. Every member of the Jewish nation, whether such by birth or proselytism, knowing the plague of his own heart, was permitted to pray in, or toward that house; and that not by natural right, but by special covenant. (1 Kings ix. 3.) The language of the Lord appearing to Solomon by night, is "*If my people which ARE CALLED BY MY NAME*," (not others) "*shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place; FOR NOW HAVE I CHOSEN AND SANCTIFIED THIS HOUSE, THAT MY NAME SHALL BE THERE FOR EVER, AND MINE EYES AND MY HEART SHALL BE THERE PERPETUALLY.*" (2 Chron. vii. 12.)

The instances which prove that the *prayer* of this temple

was individual, not social, and quite distinct both from the sacrifices of the priests, and the praises or thanksgiving of the levites, are very numerous, and will hereafter be referred to, and enlarged upon. Looking forward through the external forms of the Jewish law, to their real spirit and true object, we shall find that the ceremonies we have referred to, were intended only to lead the people, or the inquiring minds amongst them, to a knowledge of important facts or principles, which were thus figuratively portrayed, or imperfectly shadowed forth. From the language of the prophets we may collect the *spirit* of the Jewish law and worship. "*I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings.*" This is the language of the prophet Hosea; and, indeed, many passages might be cited, in which the public ceremonial worship of the temple is spoken of slightly, when compared with the inward and effectual worship of justice and mercy, humility and truth.*

We now approach toward the conclusion of the Jewish dispensation—a dispensation which appears to have well answered the purpose for which it was designed. Opposed to the prevailing polytheism of mankind, one nation acknowledged at least the existence of Jehovah, even if they did not reverence his moral law, and worship him in spirit and in truth. The barren rock had been touched by the rod of Moses, and the living waters of truth gushed forth, amid a wilderness of depravity, superstition, and crime. Surrounding nations, even the whole known world, by the commerce of the Jews—by their captivities—and by their writings, were, in part, prepared to learn the existence of one only God. It was then that Jesus was sent to "*break down the middle wall of partition*" which had hitherto divided the Jew from the Gentile; and to take the last grand step of teaching, or permitting, the pure worship of one God, to those of all the nations of the earth, who should listen to the *good news* which he was commissioned to proclaim to mankind.

Jesus announced the approaching destruction of the holy city, and, with it, of that temple which had hitherto been the sanctioned place of national worship, and individual prayer. "*The time*" (he said) "*is coming, yea, now is, when men shall neither worship in that mountain,*" (of Samaria)

* See 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. xl. 6; l. 8 to 14 and 23; li. 16; Prov. xxi. 3; Is. i. 11; Hos. vi. 6; Micah vi. 6; Mark xii. 33; Heb. ix. 9, 10.

"nor in this city;" (of Jerusalem) "*but when they that worship the Father, shall worship him in spirit and in truth; for the Father requireth such to worship him.*" The temple was to be destroyed, and with it the external and national worship of the temple was to cease. God was to be no longer regarded as peculiarly present in one place; in the privacy of the closet, therefore, and no longer "*in or toward that house,*" was it then to be permitted that the individual should offer up prayer.

We must, however, look, for a moment, at the corruptions which hypocritical pretenders of the Jewish nation had introduced on the subject of prayer; men who, according to the description of Jesus, by their traditions, had made the word of God of none effect, but who were distinguished by all the outward appearances of piety; men, indeed, who devoured widows' houses, but who, for a pretence, made long prayers. Instead of going up to the temple at the usual hours of sacrifice, many individuals, particularly those of the sect of Pharisees, appear to have been in the habit of praying ostentatiously, either at the corners of the streets, or in the public synagogues—places of assembly instituted for the reading and expounding of the law. Against this practice Jesus directs his unequivocal censure. As Jews merely, he would doubtless have told those whom he addressed, that the temple was the only public place in which the individual was justified in praying; but, addressing himself to them in the character of his disciples—contemplating the destruction of that temple, and the establishment of the pure and mental worship, which was hereafter to bear his name—under these circumstances he recommends, nay, commands, the *absolute privacy* of prayer as the only mode of prayer that would be acceptable to Deity, when his kingdom should be fully established, and the temple worship superseded. In words often quoted, but constantly, by his pretended followers, disregarded, he thus instructs his disciples: "*And when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues, and the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward, But thou, when thou prayest, ENTER INTO THY CLOSET, AND WHEN THOU HAST SHUT THY DOOR PRAY TO THY FATHER WHICH IS IN SECRET, AND THY FATHER WHICH SEETH IN SECRET, SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY.*" (Mat. vi. 5.)

The mission of the apostles, for the purpose of proclaiming

the good news (preaching the gospel) brought by Jesus, now succeeded. Besides those instances of temple prayer, or worship, with which, *as Jews*, the first Christian converts would continue to present us, some instances of prayer are at this time stated, or referred to, which must be carefully distinguished from the common worship of that, or any succeeding age;—prayer connected with the gifts of the spirit, or used as a means of promoting the object of their mission, according to an express undertaking made by their master Jesus *personally, to themselves*, and only applicable, as it was only addressed to themselves—that “*if two of them should agree on earth, as touching any thing that they should ask, it should be done of their Father which was in heaven.*” (Mat. xviii. 19.) It was probably by the means of this peculiar power or privilege, that they were enabled, not only to work those miracles, but, by means of mental and supernatural communications, to choose, amid the most difficult and trying circumstances, that proper and judicious line of conduct, which enabled them, in spite of opposition, persecution, and the danger of death itself, to diffuse over the whole known world, the facts and the principles of which they were the apostles, or appointed messengers.

By the means of their exertions the Christian church was, under the blessing of God, extensively established. Of that church social union was the fundamental principle; the members of it were to be knit together like the members of the human body, and to be animated by “*one heart and one mind.*” They were instructed “*not to forget the assembling themselves together, as the manner of some was;*” but to meet for the purposes of mutual improvement—for edification—for instruction—for exhortation; but they were not to meet to observe days, or times, or seasons—to be judged in meats, or in drinks—to keep new moons or sabbath days; still less, we may conclude, were they to meet to pray in public, when the whole spirit of their faith was opposed to external forms, and the ostentatious display of piety; and when they had not only the example, but the express and unconditional command of their master, in favour of the prayer of the closet.

If we look backward on our course, for a moment, we shall see by what gradual, and almost imperceptible steps we have, hitherto, been led from the simplest idea of religious homage, up to the most refined and enlightened mode of which we can have any conception. We have seen, in the first instance, no poetical fiction which delights to

describe the earliest as a golden age; but, on the contrary, a natural picture of the growth and expansion of the human intellect, and a wonderfully wise adaptation of the dispensations of Providence to each successive stage, in the progress of society. In arriving at the command of Jesus to his followers—that they should pray in the privacy of the closet; and in recording the practice of the early Christian church as consequent upon that command, we may be regarded as having attained *the summit of pure and intellectual worship*. We pass on; and our course must now, for some time, be downward—towards the depths of corruption, and of priestcraft.

Even in the life time of the apostles men arose who, from ignorance, or from interested motives, began to corrupt the pure principles and discipline of the Christian church. Paul cautions Timothy against individuals whom he describes as “*proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes of words;*” and he predicts that the time shall come, when there shall be in the church those who, indeed, “*have A FORM of godliness, but deny the POWER thereof.*” A prediction, alas! speedily, and to the very letter, fulfilled. Of the progress of corruption, in perverting the pure worship of God, as established by Jesus and his apostles, we have on record but few traces; and the question of prayer, in particular, is one which has been but little inquired into. An attachment to external forms and ceremonies was possessed in common by the Jewish and by the Pagan converts; together with the doctrines of each, the worship of, at once, the Jewish, and of the Pagan temples, was thus gradually introduced into the Christian church. After an interval of nearly two centuries, we find, in the writings of Justin, Tertullian, &c. traces of all those corruptions, in doctrine and discipline, which have since prevailed under the name of Christian. Amongst others of this description, is mentioned the publicity of prayer in their assemblies. They appear, however, to have gone one step further than their predecessors, by the introduction of what has since been called *social* prayer, or the common and stated prayer of the whole assembly—a practice unknown to the Jewish people; the prayer, both of their temple and synagogue, having been individual; a practice also, in many respects, as absurd in itself, as it is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity.

The progress of abuse and corruption, in this particular, must have been rapid; in one of the earliest councils. (that of

Laodicea) it was provided, (Canon 17) "*that a lesson should be interposed in the midst after every Psalm; which was done*" (we are informed) "*to take off the weariness of the people, whose minds might be apt to tire, in passing through those prolix offices, altogether; especially the lessons being so large and many.*"* How different this from the simple prayer of the heart, and of the closet, as commanded by the founder of Christianity!

Two circumstances appear to have mainly aided, about this period, in the introduction of public and stated prayer, in the self-named Christian churches; the one, the rise and establishment of a regular priesthood, who assumed the right of interposing between God and the people; and who, by their office, therefore, claimed to be the public medium of the prayers of the church: the other the union of that church, or its priesthood, with the temporal power, and, as a consequence, the corrupt means adopted to assimilate the religion of Jesus with the habits and conceptions of its pagan converts, by which Christianity, instead of being a religion which appealed to the reason of mankind, and which the common people could hear with gladness, was a faith received at court, and established by the strong arm of power; and worship, instead of being that "*of the spirit and of truth,*" became a counterpart of pagan superstition, which it servilely imitated in its orders, titles, garments, ceremonies, and observances; being, in fact, but an ostentatious pageant, intended to impose on the people, and calculated to assist in enslaving them.

The wily impostor Constantine—whilst using the cross as a warlike banner, the more effectually to gain his ambitious purposes, as *a sign under which he was to conquer!*—erected magnificent temples; patronized a splendidly endowed priesthood; and provided for all the forms and ceremonies of a worship, called by the name of Christian, but which, in reality, was an incongruous compound of paganism and Judaism. Thus become the temporal head of the church, he is said—on all his gold coin, in his pictures, and in his statues—to have caused his image to be represented *in the posture of a person praying, with his hands spread abroad, and his eyes lift up to heaven!*†

* See "*Primitive Christianity; or, The Religion of the Ancient Christians, in the First Ages of the Gospel.*" By William Cave, D.D.—London, 1698." Ch. ix. p. 185.

† Ibid. p. 179.

A recent writer has, in bold, but correct and appropriate, language, described the Christian church, so called, as it existed in this age, "Suddenly acquiring power, and finally assuming infallibility; observing pagan feasts as religious ceremonies; consecrating heathen rites into Christian solemnities; and, transforming the non-observances of primitive simplicity into precedents for gorgeous ceremony, the church blazed with a scorching splendour that withered up the heart of man. Every accession to the dominion of ecclesiastics over his property and intellect, induced self-relaxation and sloth; to the boldness that seized a liberal supply for spiritual support, succeeded the craft that extended it to a boundless revenue for effeminate indulgence."*

What ensued throughout the ten succeeding centuries is too well known, to need more than a brief narration. As pure Christianity further declined, public prayer, and all its attendant pomps and ceremonies, naturally increased. The religion of the Romish church, when arrived at its meridian—at its "*noon of night*"—in what is, nearly without a figure, called the dark ages—consisted almost wholly of masses, intercessions, and public prayers for the living, or for the dead, of which the priest was the medium, standing as an intercessor between God and the degraded people—the laity, as they were contemptuously called, who were treated and regarded as of a lower *caste*—the pariahs, or out-casts of the earth.

The outward and ceremonial observances of religion, in this age, attained the greatest height of which they were, perhaps, susceptible. If it was once said of an ancient city, remarkable for its spirit of idolatry, that it contained more Gods than men, it might, with equal truth, at this time, have been said of numerous cities, that they possessed nearly as many priests as laymen; and as many days, in the course of the year, devoted to religious ceremonials, as remained for the civil purposes of life. Worship and prayer, no longer addressed exclusively to the Deity, was extended, with a mixture of profanity and absurdity, to the son of God, and the mother of God—to hosts of angels, and armies of saints and martyrs. Religious worship would thus have been made insupportably tedious and oppressive, but that it naturally became as mechanical as it was formal;

* Ancient Mysteries Described, by William Hone.—London, 1823.

the prayers of the multitude were wafted towards heaven by their ecclesiastics, with as much regularity, and probably with as little feeling, as by the priests of the Calmuck Tartars, who are said to consign the petitions of *their* laity to a windmill—quietly smoking their pipes, whilst the machinery performs its sacred office. The grossest excesses, and the vilest abominations, were now also perpetrated and encouraged, under the guise of religious worship. Writers have, even in later times, discovered, in supposed Christian observances, remains of pagan enormities, respecting which the decencies of modern times compel us to silence. Setting these aside, however, enough will still remain for our present purpose. Cedranus, one of the Byzantine historians, who flourished about the year 1050, records that

“Theophylact (about the year 900) introduced the practice which prevails even to this day, of scandalizing God, and the memory of his saints, on the most splendid and popular festivals, by indecent and ridiculous songs, and enormous shoutings; even in the midst of those sacred hymns which we ought to offer to the Divine Grace, with compunction of heart for the salvation of our souls.”

Reference appears here to be chiefly made to the *feast of fools*, and the *feast of the ass*; afterwards so frequently observed in both the eastern and western churches.

“In France” (observes the author of ‘Ancient Mysteries Described,’ p. 157 and 161, when speaking of the former of these solemnities) “in France, at different cathedrals there was a bishop, or an archbishop, of fools elected; and in the churches immediately dependent upon the papal see, a pope of fools; these mock pontiffs had usually a proper suite of ecclesiastics.” Having entered the church in masks, some of them personating females, and practising wanton devices, “during divine service they sang indecent songs in the choir; ate rich puddings on the corner of the altar; played at dice upon it, by the side of the priest, while he celebrated mass; incensed it with smoke from old burnt shoes; and ran leaping all over the church. The bishop, or pope, of fools, performed the service, habited in pontifical garments, and gave his benediction.”

“The feast of the ass, antiently celebrated at Beauvais every year, on the 14th of January, commemorated the flight of the Virgin into Egypt, with the infant Jesus. To represent the Virgin the most beautiful girl in the city, with a pretty child in her arms, was placed on an ass, richly caparisoned. Thus mounted she preceded the bishop and his clergy, and they all went in grand procession, from the cathedral to the parish church of St. Stephen. On entering the chancel they ranged themselves on the right side of the altar; the mass immediately commenced, and the *Introit*, *Lord have mercy upon us*, *Gloria Patri*, the *Credo*, were terminated by the burthen of *Hin-Han, Hin-Han*, in imitation of the braying of an ass.”

Ignorance was now, indeed, the mother of devotion; and with ignorance and a love of the mere forms of religion, persecution naturally went hand-in-hand. An “*act of faith*”

was, in later times, the name given to the last sad scene, at which the victims of the inquisition paid the forfeit of their lives to their cruel oppressors. This was emphatically considered as a praiseworthy and pious act of religious worship. Kings, with their courts, have attended it as such; and priests were always, (though professing to disavow it) in reality, the officiating ministers. Little more than a century has elapsed since the last performance of this—religious ceremony!* Political events have, since that period, produced various changes in the ecclesiastical establishments of the European continent; but we have lately beheld strong and but too successful efforts for the restoration of papal ascendancy, and of the Catholic forms of worship. Several facts recorded in the previous number of this work†, will best illustrate the latter position; in France, particularly, the *re-establishment of the Brotherhood of the Cross*, speaks volumes upon this subject. “Seven thousand Christians,” we are told, “prostrated themselves at the foot of the cross, and were inscribed in the brotherhood, amid cries of ‘Vive la Croix’—‘Vivent les Bourbons!’” Amid “tears abundantly shed, the procession commenced, attended by affecting music, and accompanied by pious songs; passing over a road strewn with flowers, towards an altar covered with garlands—through triumphal arches prepared by the faithful, as,” they say, “in the days of the primitive

* When Mr. Wilcox, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, was minister to the English factory at Lisbon, he wrote the following letter to Dr. Gilbert Burnet.—Dated Lisbon, Jan. 15, 1706.

“MY LORD.—In obedience to your Lordship’s commands of the 10th ult. I have here sent all that was printed concerning the last Auto da Fé. I saw the whole process, which was agreeable to what is published by Limborch and others on the subject. Of the five persons condemned there were but four burnt, Antonio Tavares, by an unusual reprieve, being saved after the procession. Heytor Dias and Maria Pinteyra were burnt alive, and the other two first strangled. The execution was very cruel. The woman was alive, in the flames, half an hour, and the man above an hour. *The present king and his brothers* were seated at a window, so near as to be addressed to a considerable time, in very moving terms, by the man as he was burning. But though the favour he begged was only a few more faggots, yet he was not able to obtain it.” The description which follows of the means taken to prolong the agonies of the victims is too horrible to be transcribed. Such is the loving kindness of priestcraft! The reader will find much valuable information on this subject, communicated in a popular form, in “*A History of Religious Persecutions, from the Apostolic Age to the Present Time*. By F. B. Wright—8vo.—Liverpool, 1816.”

† See the Review of the Religious World, p. 41, &c.

"church; seven or eight hundred SOLDIERS, many officers, magistrates, and persons of the first rank being present; the Labanum, or standard of the cross, was carried by VETERANS; who themselves, covered with glory, came that day, to offer sacrifices to the glory of the God of peace."

Such is religious worship, as now re-established over the greater part of the continent of Europe. In order to trace its progress in our own, as well as in some other countries, we must now go back a few centuries, to the date of what is called *The Reformation*.

Some evils were here redressed—some corruptions removed—some absurdities exploded; but the essential dominion of anti-christ still remained. Religious supremacy, amid the various classes of "*protestant papists*" in this and other countries, was merely transferred from the pope to the prince, or temporal magistrate; and, whatever might be the extent or the degree of reformation, the priest was still retained, and with the priest, of course, the *work* of the priest—the forms of public prayer; and, more or less, the ceremonial parts of religious worship.

A marked distinction, however, as to the mode of performing public prayer arose, or was rather revived, at this time, between too numerous and powerful parties. The *liturgic* form—consisting of pre-composed prayers, in which the people, either throughout, or alternately, in the way of response, accompany the priest—having been the practice of the church of Rome, naturally became that of the *church of England*,* as well as of some other establishments; built, as that was, on the model of the mother church. Whilst the *extemporaneous* form, more fitted to the excitement of strong feeling, and better calculated for an appeal to the passions of the multitude, has been generally adopted by the more enthusiastic or fanatical classes of *dissenters*.

The Unitarians, at a later period, possessed of more enlightened doctrinal views, but still retaining the priest at the head of their establishments, have also equally retained,

* For some time the *services*, as they were called, of the several English cathedrals, though all equally borrowed from Roman *missals*, were different from each other; thus there were the services of Westminster, of Canterbury, Salisbury, &c. Inconvenience being supposed to arise from this, one set form was provided by convocation, and afterwards established by law; hence the title *The Book of Common Prayer*. When the *Act of Uniformity* was passed, this book was therein recited at length, with a view to which it has therefore been truly said, that the form of worship of the established church, is but "*a long act of parliament*."

and now strongly defend the practice of *public social prayer*. They may be said, indeed, to “*administer it in both kinds*,” a part of their body having adopted the use of a “*reformed liturgy*,” whilst the greater number of their preachers practice what they call *social prayer*, by the minister’s praying himself, (in the plural number, indeed) either extemporaneously, or from a written form; the congregation maintaining throughout, a strict and uninterrupted silence.

Opposed to all these, on the subject of social prayer, as on many other subjects, stands the practice of the *Christian*—commonly known by the name of *The Freethinking Christian-church*. The object of its members has been to call out from the world an assembly, formed on the principles, and governed by the laws which may be collected from the New Testament, as directing the primitive churches, when first founded by the immediate apostles of Jesus. Their chief aim has been directed to the restoring what may be truly called *social worship*, by substituting a closeness of union, and a oneness of affection, between the members of their body, in the place of that isolated and solitary species of religion, which marks the unorganized churches of the present day, whether amongst establishments, or the dissenting bodies. But, whilst advocates for the worship of the heart, and the prayer of the closet, they have seen cause for discontinuing, as irrational in itself, as inconsistent with scripture, and opposed to the spirit of Christianity, the prevailing practice of *public social prayer*. In the church, they conceive, they are bound to attend to the Christian duties of instruction, exhortation, and edification of each other; before the world, and in the common intercourse of life, they feel themselves called on to act up to the exalted principles of their religion, as far as their knowledge, or their capabilities, may extend; but it is in the closet, and only in the closet—shut out from the glare, from the business, and the various distractions of the world—that they believe the Christian should presume to offer up his supplications to his heavenly Father, in the humble hope that, where a life of virtue attests the sincerity of the prayer, “*his Father, who seeth in secret, will reward him openly*.”

I have now taken a brief and general survey, from the earliest records down to the present time, of the various opinions and practices which have existed on the subject of religious *worship* in general, and of *prayer* in particular. From this statement the question of the propriety of *public*

social prayer has naturally arisen. That practice has, certainly, in its favour, what its advocates claim for it—the almost universal sanction of every sect and party, calling itself Christian. They further claim, in its support, the practice of the patriarchs, and of the Jews, as a nation; the command of Jesus, his example, and that of his disciples; contending, that to pray publicly and socially is a custom sanctioned by the apostolic churches—supported by the authority of the New Testament, no less than by that of the earliest succeeding writers of the Christian era, and also defensible on the grounds of reason, and of the nature of things. *On all these last-named points it will be perceived that I differ from these individuals.* It will be my object, in the course of some future Essays, to state the grounds of this difference; and to maintain, by argument and the authority of the scriptures, the several positions which I have laid down in the course of the preceding statement. *That statement is, in fact, MY CASE, which I hold myself bound hereafter to support, by evidence and argument.* The question, although it has already been ably argued upon general principles, is, in a great measure, new in its details; it will be my endeavour, by fairly citing the arguments of the defenders of this practice, and plainly stating my own views in reply, to put the reader in possession of both sides of the question, and thus enable him to arrive at a decision of his own. On this, as on every subject, discussion must be beneficial; error, however sanctioned by “*the authority of ages,*” may naturally shun the light; but truth, it has been long since found, is mighty; and, when free inquiry exists, then the might of truth must, at length, prevail.

J. D.

THE FREETHINKING CHRISTIANS.

As a body teaching the principles of primitive Christianity we are probably unknown to some of our readers; in order, therefore, to meet what, perchance, may be the wishes of such persons, we give the accompanying Extract from a work entitled “The Religions and Religious Ceremonies of all Nations, by the Rev. J. Nightingale;” which, although published in 1821, we have only just perused, and with which we have had no connexion; not having, indeed, the slightest knowledge of the author. It is, therefore, an independant document; and

although not correct in every particular; yet being so to a considerable extent, is of value; as being the uninfluenced and impartial relation of one that to us is an entire stranger. For a correct account of the Freethinking Christians we refer the reader to "Evans's Sketch of the Different Denominations of the "Religious World."

"The *Freethinking Christians* are a sect of Unitarians who sprung up in London, about ten or twelve years ago. They have one meeting-house in London, and, I believe, a few others in different parts of the country.

"With the Unitarians they deny the divinity of Christ's person, but believe in the divine character or nature of his mission as a teacher of religion. They regard the New Testament as the only authentic rule of faith and practice. They believe the church of God to consist of an assembly of men, believing the truth of Christianity, and united, under the authority of Jesus, in the bonds of Christian fellowship. The example of the apostles they take to be the only rule of church discipline; the unity of the church, as forming one great family of Christians scattered over the face of the globe, as an essential characteristic of Christianity; and they maintain, that there is a perfect equality of the members of a Christian church, in which all power rests. They have, however, certain officers, as an elder, whose business it is to 'preside at their public assemblies, to regulate their private meetings, to preserve order, and to attend especially to the spiritual wants and concerns of the church.' They have two deacons, whose business is to assist the elder, and to attend to the civil affairs of the church. All have a right to teach or preach; hence they have no hired minister, or pastor.

"They reject Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Public Social Worship. In their assemblies, therefore, they have neither singing nor prayer; and they renounce all those doctrines usually termed orthodox in other societies, as the Trinity, the Atonement, original sin; the existence of devils, and of both good and evil spirits or angels; the eternity of future punishments; the immateriality and immortality of the soul; the inspiration of the Bible, 'as a book,' though they admit the origin of revelation, and the miracles, and other parts of the sacred scriptures.

"Their public meetings are conducted after the manner of an ordinary Debating or Philosophical Society; and they frequently differ in their opinions amongst themselves.

They sit in their meetings with covered heads, like the Quakers, and make very free in censuring, if not condemning, all other sects of Christians whatever, being extremely lavish in their abuse of the priesthood.

“These Christians have already had their share of persecution; and there have not been wanting powerful efforts to suppress their meetings; but hitherto without effect; and it is hoped that they will not again be subjected to any inconvenience on account of their peculiarities of belief and practice as Christians. They have, of late years, made strong remonstrances against being compelled to marry according to the rites of the church of England; believing marriage to be a civil contract, and not a divine rite. Their opposition, however, has hitherto been limited to a previous remonstrance addressed to the clergyman, after which they submit to the prescribed forms. We have not, however, as yet heard of any gross instances of conjugal infidelity amongst them. Most of their leading elders and other members, are men of considerable talents, and respectability in public and private life; but their unconquerable spirit for ‘Reform,’ both in church and state, renders them objects of no small suspicion to their adversaries. It is only by opposing them that they are likely ever to become sufficiently numerous to do any essential evil to the interests of true Christianity, even were they so disposed, which charity should induce us to believe is not the case.”

NOTE.—The above statement of what we believe, and what we disbelieve, is generally correct; but we do not make the profession of *any* creed, or set of opinions, a condition upon joining our body, or use it as a test afterwards. We are Christians, and therefore, as a consequence, we are *Freethinkers*; but as a body we do not presume to dictate *what* our members shall think, and what they shall not. Upon controverted points of doctrine there was, indeed, a time when we were believers in most of the orthodox opinions; but from *thinking freely*, we have discarded them, because they are unscriptural. Whilst the bond of union, with us, is not sentiment, an admission of the Messiahship and Resurrection of Jesus we consider indispensable; and, as consequent upon that admission, an implicit obedience to his laws and the necessary discipline of the Christian church. The *marriage* question, briefly referred to above, is, in truth, to all conscientious dissenters from the establishment, a most important one; and we take credit to ourselves for having originated the discussion, and for making humble, perhaps, but most determined efforts in support of the rights of conscience, which, in no act of our lives, can be more cruelly trampled upon than they now are, by compelling dissenters to marry according to the ritual of the church of England. The Unitarians and other bodies having at length, to a certain extent at least, followed our example, and having united in their petitions to parliament upon this subject, some relief is confidently expected before the close of the present session.

THE YEAR.

How oft around the brow of the young year
Poets have twined their garlands—with sweet song
Proclaimed the coming blossoms of the Spring—
And Summer's fruits and Autumn's harvests praised.

Sage moralists and grave divines have taught
(Shaking their heads portentous) "Life is brief
"And death terrific." Yet themselves have lived
As though eternal were their station here—
And death an idle, unappalling dream,
Of which they recked not. Solemn mockery!
To descant on the silent lapse of time;
To preach of years that, like the rolling floods,
Follow on years, till in the boundless deep,
Eternal, they are buried;—yet to reap
No harvest—draw no moral from the tale!
To live as servile, and as sensual too,
(Mid all their sounding morals) as the herd
That followed Epicurus. Prostrate, low—
To lick the dust before a mortal throne;
And laud a man, whose span of life, themselves
Proclaim—how brief! To follow earthly things,
And prize them too; and seek them as the goal
To which their speed is tending;—whilst they *teach*
Another race—to gain another world!
These are harsh discords in the song of life,
That grate upon the ear, and chill the heart,
Till we lament our nature. These confirm
The sceptic in his doubts; who smiles to see
Religion—in the *lives* of priests—a name!
'Tis therefore—wielded by such hands—the dart
Of truth falls powerless, and the unthinking run
Unchecked, their mad career;—till feeble age
Eats up the vigour of licentious youth,
Like the lean kine, which, in proud Pharoah's dream,
Consumed the strong ones. Yet 'tis true not less
That life is brief—and death terrific too.

True—time flows on, and to the boundless deep,
 Eternal! it *will* waft us. Let us pause—
 And trim the vessel for so long a course;
 And call our prudence and our courage up,
 To aid us on the voyage. I confess—
 Weakness it may be—but I still confess
 Myself amongst the number who prefer
 To sail by chart and compass;—who much wish,
 By observation of the lights of heaven,
 To guide their course on earth;—and in the night—
 Tempestuous oft, and peril-fraught—of life
 To mark religion's fixed and guiding star.
 Religion! Piety! names much abused
 And little understood by worldly men
 Professing each. Religion! Piety!
 To worship God and love him—if to man
 Love be permitted;—these are glorious themes—
 For meditation fit;—and to be sung
 With lowliness and caution. They reveal
 Man's best possession, and his highest good;—
 They raise his nature—dignify his hopes—
 And stamp his Maker's image on his mind.
 Mistaken oft (their masks, or counterfeits)
 Lo! Superstition and fanatic Zeal
 Frown o'er the earth, and make a wilderness
 Where Nature meant a garden! These degrade
 Man and his nature;—these pervert the will
 Benign of God;—they vilify his works,
 And cast sad odium o'er his gracious word.

“How rotten—how corrupt the human heart!
 “How desperately wicked! Not one thought
 “Attuned to virtue;—not a single act
 “But, mark'd by dire depravity, proclaims
 “His fallen being and degraded state.
 “Not his a partial sickness;—not the blight
 “Which shakes the bloom, but rotten at the root
 “He grows;—of flower and fruit devoid;—of good
 “Incapable by nature. Child of wrath—
 “And worthy to become so! Downward prone
 “The reptile licks the dust—nor dares to raise
 “His breath towards incens'd—indignant heaven.

" His all of virtue worthless ;—each bright art
 " Of seeming good—hypocrisy and guile."

Such—and so hideous—and more fearful still
 (Till we expect abhorring earth will gape
 And whelm the monster in her dark abyss)
 Is man—his Maker's image! as pourtrayed
 In pulpits—when, in sable garb, the priest
 Deals forth anathemas;—and echoes loud
 Threats of damnation in despairing ears.
 The self-named prophet sees! his sleeky hair
 Lank falling o'er a face of thought devoid—
 Yet full of fury—as he calls on God—
 A wrathful God! to aid his preacher's cause.

In Nature's broadest mould (to wield a plough
 More fitting) his proportions framed;—his hands,
 Like a flail falling, shakes the groaning desk;—
 His brow, with grace and perspiration fraught,
 Frowns o'er the crouching multitude, who hear
 They all are worthless—and groan out "*Amen!*"
 " Pastor and people—each," *he* says, " are vile!"
 Who doubts the *dictum* of the holy man?
 If they *be* worthless, let us mark them then;
 If vile, let us avoid them. They best know
 The plague-spots on their hearts. If hypocrites,
 Let us beware that *we* be not deceived.
 But 'tis a libel on the name of God—
 Rank blasphemy—to say that man was made
 Incapable of virtue;—that his heart
 Cannot conceive, or his hand execute
 One thought or deed aright. Was it a dream,
 Amid the strugglings of my erring youth,
 When, o'er the clouds of passion, reason rose,
 The mind's bright day-dawn! gilding all the scene,
 And lighting on to virtue? Passion toss'd,
 With care—with crime oppressed, still Truth is dear.
 Yes! Man may wander in the paths of vice
 An exile—and an alien—and a slave;
 But virtue is his home! It is the hearth
 Paternal, where the heart and its desires
 Will linger. 'Tis that favoured—cherished spot,
 Which, absent, we deplore—and, present, love!

Why starts the tear at the sad tale of woe?
 Compassion calls on man to aid his kind.
 'Tis called *humanity*;—it takes our name,
 And marks our nature. Wherefore throbs the pulse,
 Indignant! when the tyrant's galling chain
 Entwines his victim? or the bigot's fires
 Pre-figure hell—himself the torturing fiend—
 But that a love of truth and justice reigns,
 Which flames or fetters cannot burn or bind?
 Why in the historic page, repeated oft,
 And with applause repeated, stands each deed,
 Heroic or sublime? Why noted strong
 With execration every deed of shame—
 But that within their hearts—*deep* in their hearts—
 All men alike applaud the good, and all,
 Though self-condemned, condemn the evil! See!
 'Tis *Curtius* leaps within the yawning gulph!
 'Tis *Codrus* falls—to save their country each!
 The youthful Macedonian smiles and takes,
 Of venom falsely charged, the proffered draught,
 In confidence of friendship. See return
 To chains and torture (light when void of shame)
 The Roman—who his country counselled true,
 His life the penalty. See too prepared
 The hemlock and the bowl—and *he** must die
 Whose crime was wisdom;—he whose questions keen
 Pointed with truth—perplexed the jarring schools.
 He falls who truth's eternal dictates taught—
 Victim, alas! of sophists and buffoons!†

* Socrates.

† The instances adduced of virtue are, perhaps, too familiar with most readers, to render explanation necessary; yet a brief remark may prevent mistake or obscurity. To say nothing of Curtius, whose supposed self-devotion in leaping into the gulph, is a matter of common allusion; the oracle having declared, on an invasion, that that party who shed the first blood should be defeated, Codrus, king of Athens, sought the enemy's camp in disguise, and, provoking them to violence, fell the first victim. Alexander the Great, at the brink of the grave, from having bathed in the Cydnus when overheated, received, at the moment when taking a draught from the hand of his friend and physician Phillip, an anonymous scroll, stating that it was intended to poison him; he put the letter, with a smile, into the hands of Phillip, and immediately drank off the medicine. Regulus, being made prisoner by the Carthaginians, was sent by them to Rome, (under a pledge that he would return) to negotiate a peace, and an exchange of prisoners; knowing the reduced state of those who sent him, he strongly advised against both—and then voluntarily returned to tortures and to death.

Art thou unmoved? By Nature sore depraved,
 Doth no enthusiastic glow arise
 At acts like these? Is there no string within
 To vibrate in accordance with such tones?
 No busy thought that whispers to the heart—
 “I too am man, and not incapable
 “Of lofty thoughts—and actions great and good?”
 If such thou art—there is a theme that speaks—
 Though little heeded—volumes to the heart
 Attuned to truth. There breathed a man who fell—
 Than patriots nobler—to preserve *mankind*!
 A man—above all Greek and Roman lore—
 Yet little sung by bards, and falsely scanned
 By friends who misconceive—and foes who hate
 What either knows not of. A man whose life
 Was virtue's pattern;—whose exalted course,
 Above the mists of passion and of sense,
 To pride impervious, pierced through error's maze;
 Who thought—and spoke—and felt—and *lived* the truth.
 What laurels decked his brow? A wreath of thorns.
 What was his fate? How walked he and how fell?
 A lowly life—and an untimely end.
 By priests and hypocrites (the *rabbis* named,
 The *reverend* of their day) to death pursued,
 He died a martyr in a glorious cause—
 Meet emblem of its nature and its fate,
 By greatness and hypocrisy abhorred.
 He died a martyr! Death, with pangs for all,
 For him had tortures all must not endure:
 Stripes and the cross—rude insults, than the gall
 He drank, more bitter. And his parting prayer—
 Was it for vengeance? For himself? His friends?
 No! his oppressors. They who sought his life—
 Who madly nailed him to the hated tree,
 And scoffed him there: for these he prayed, and cried
 “Forgive them, father! for they know not what
 “They do—unthinking.” Thus A MAN hath prayed—
 Our pattern and example! Say not then
 That man is vile and rotten at the core—
 His nature fallen and his state corrupt.
 Reverse the picture. Rather cultivate

The seeds of good within him. Fan to flame
 The embers, deadened oft, yet warm within,
 Of heaven-sent truth. Arouse him from the trance,
 Delusive and enervating of sense.
 Urge him to speed—and thunder in his ear
 The danger and the madness of delay.
 Clothe him in armour;—gird him round with truth;
 With righteousness his breast-plate;—for his shield
 Humility and confidence in God.
 Deliverance his helmet;—and his sword—
 The swift and soul-convincing word of life.
 Then leave him to his warfare—with the world,
 And the world's greatness;—with (more potent foes!)
 Himself—his passions! he shall conquer all,
 And rise triumphant from the arduous strife,
 Quenching the fiery darts of evil men,
 And ruling firm the empire of his mind.
 Then peaceful sit him down in that great day,
 When his Creator's glorious kingdom comes,
 And earth and all its phantoms—fade away!

(*To be continued.*)

ON THE PAY OF THE DISSENTING PRIESTHOOD.

With Extracts from "The Support of the Christian Ministry."

A Sermon, by James Bennett, of Rotherham College.

THE existence of a priesthood, whose members exercise
 an exclusive right to teach—and who, following religion as
 a trade, are *paid* for thus teaching—is common to nearly all
 dissenting parties, as well as to the establishment. The
 Freethinking Christian church, who consider the equality
 of its members, and the absence of the hiring teacher,
 as *essential* points of Christianity, is, indeed, almost, if not
 altogether, the sole exception. The funds and revenues of the
 established church, however, being prescribed and defined
 by law, the sources of those funds and revenues are com-
 paratively well known; but with regard to the dissenting
 bodies, the case is different. The payments to the ministry:

being here, in a great measure, voluntary—they are also private; it is not to the interest, and frequently not to the credit of either party, that the exact *mode* of raising the supplies, and levying the contributions, should be known to those who are without. Yet the system is too extensive a one not to have its regular plans and organization. To say nothing of the numerous meeting-houses of dissenters already established, with priests duly provided for, at the expence of their respective congregations, it should be borne in mind that, in various parts of this kingdom, there are academies—universities they might not improperly be called—for the bringing up of young men to what is called “the Christian ministry.” These, as they grow up, are regularly drafted off, to supply vacancies in “widowed churches;” or to occupy the pulpit of some one of those newly-opened chapels, which, as regularly as the public house, the reader may observe constantly spring up in every direction immediately that a few new houses are erected, and almost before sufficient time is allowed for those houses to become inhabited. All this implies system and regularity of plan. The thing is, in fact, one of interest only; and it is conducted throughout upon thorough trading principles.

On this subject we may probably feel inclined, occasionally, to lay before our readers, such information as may have reached us; we could, at this time, point out an individual, well known in the city of London for his commercial activity, who is, at the same time, a chief pillar in supporting one of the dissenting universities to which we have alluded; amongst other speculations his capital has been employed, and report says most successfully employed, in the building of chapels: his plan being to erect a meeting-house in a new or a populous neighbourhood—to supply from the academy with which he is connected a pastor suited—as well as may be—to the class of people which he is called upon to address; and then, when a considerable rental has been raised, in the form of payments for pews, &c., to seize the first opportunity of granting a lease at a considerable premium; or of disposing of the freehold to advantage. We have, not long since, seen a plan of a chapel, upon the erection of which, the individual in question was said to be expending no less a sum than ten thousand pounds.

Thus much with regard to the building of chapels;—as much, or more, might be said upon the mode of paying the priests who preach in them. On some future occasion we may take an opportunity of detailing the peculiar circum-

stances under which one or more of the *Unitarian* teachers, in or near the metropolis, obtained their places, and receive their support; but our present object is to notice and to supply extracts from a work which affords some curious information on the subject of supporting the dissenting priesthood; the full title of the book, as it now lies before us, is as follows: "*The Support of the Christian Ministry.—A Sermon, preached at the Nether Chapel, Sheffield; before the Associated Churches and Ministers assembled there, April 25, 1821.—By James Bennett.*" "The Lord hath ordained that they who preach the gospel should 'live of the gospel.'—Paul. *Published by the Association.*" *Third Edition. London, 1821.**

The "associated churches" before whom this sermon was preached are, we are informed, of the *Independent* denomination: the preacher dates his dedication (which is to the "associated ministers and churches to whom the sermon was preached") from "Rotherham college;" an institution for the education of ministers of that sect, of which Mr. Bennett is tutor. The occasion, no less than the performance, is a remarkable one. Delivered before the "associated ministers," and no doubt before his pupils also—the rising generation, or the embryo brood of preachers—its express object is to support their claims, not only to be paid, but to be handsomely paid—for their labours. There is about the present production no ambiguity on this subject—no reserve—no recommendation of half measures: it goes direct to the subject in hand, and unblushingly asserts the right—even the *divine* right—of the priest to his "hire and salary." "On the coolest consideration" (says the preacher, p. 7) "I feel myself entitled to *all Christian freedom* in discussing *this subject.*" "I request, then, your candid attention to I. *The divine appointment,*† that the churches of Christ should support their ministers." In support of this position he contends that, "Firstly, Under the Mosaic dispensation God enjoined that the ministers of religion should be supported by the contributions of the people." That, "Secondly, The same duty, of supporting the ministers of religion, is enjoined" (he elsewhere says *perpetuated*) "under the gospel." And he further contends, Thirdly, that this practice of paying priests "may, in fact,

* The name of Bennett, in connexion with that of Bogue, is well known as that of a writer some years since, on the subject of dissenters.

† These words are thus printed in italics in the original.

"be termed a duty of natural religion; or, in other words, that it is but common justice."

With regard to the argument from the Jewish law, the author is particularly anxious that it should be remembered that *every thing* therein contained is not to be despised or lost sight of. "Let no one take alarm" (he says, p. 7) "at this appeal to the law, as if I wished to bring them under the Jewish yoke of ceremonies." Far from this, it is only where "legal rites unfolded evangelical truths," that he contends for their being regarded as imperative upon us in the present day. Amongst the "*duties*" "*guides*" and "*consolations*" which are not abolished—amongst the things "*first announced to the world by Moses and the prophets*," but still "*most dear to our hearts as Christians*"—amongst "*the legal rites which have unfolded evangelical truths*"—amongst these is, of course, found by the preacher of Rotherham college, the *perpetual* duty of paying a priesthood; although, when he comes to speak of tithes (*of which, as a dissenting priest, he can have no portion*) he acutely enough discovers that these were "*a part of the Levitical law of ceremonies which is now abolished*," and shrewdly asks (p. 17) "*What earthly power is authorized to take this branch of the Jewish religion, and engraft it on the Christian?*" A question which has the double advantage of being unanswerable in itself, and of forming a triumphant reply to the previous part of his own performance.

The claim of "*the Christian ministry*," not merely to support, but affluence, is then argued at length from the New Testament. It is not, at this time, our intention to enter into the *controversial* part of this subject; we shall only, therefore, say that the arguments are all founded upon the assumption that "*the Christian ministry*" (that is, that Messrs. Thomas Raffles, Bengo Collier, Rowland Hill, Alexander Fletcher, Robert Aspland, Penzance Smith, William Tozer, James Bennett, and an endless *et cetera* of teachers, and that too of *opposite* doctrines) are the authorized successors of the apostles; an assumption which, if made seriously, shews gross ignorance; and if hazarded without conviction, would argue no great degree of honesty. This question lies in a small compass. The apostles were authorized by Deity to proclaim amongst strangers the good news of revelation; they made this proclamation at the expence of every worldly comfort, and at the sacrifice of the usual means of support. They had a natural right, therefore—not to pay—not to hire—not to

affluence;—but, strictly speaking, to support;—that is, to their daily bread—to the means of actual existence: but even this right it was the glory of a chief apostle that he had not availed himself of. The apostles too were not stationary officers of Christian churches, but messengers sent out to form and organize Christian churches. James Bennett, and the other reverends of our days, *cannot*, therefore, be the successors of the apostles; for these men are *not* authorized—these men do *not* go forth as messengers sent amongst strangers, to the sacrifice of every previous possession; and further, these men do *not* humbly and modestly ask for the common means of support, but impudently and selfishly lay claim to regular salaries; and, if possible of attainment, to splendid stipends.

Some curious concessions are made on the subject, by Mr. Bennett; he allows (p. 16) that “while the duty of supporting ministers is most unequivocally enjoined,” (in the New Testament) “*no exact mode is prescribed*; a deficiency which he accounts for by stating it as “a striking characteristic of the Christian religion—that it rules by *grand general principles*.” In the liberal “support of the Christian ministry” we are, therefore, left “as men endowed with spiritual wisdom, delicate consciences, and *generous affections*, to follow out the general principles which the gospel furnishes to *all their legitimate extent*.” Thus the payment of priests is assumed as “a *grand general principle*” of Christianity; and the hearers of our dissenting clergy are modestly exhorted generously to push that principle “to *all its legitimate extent*!”

“As that paramount authority” (continues Mr. Bennett, p. 22) “which prescribed exactly what should be given to the ancient religion, *has not said one word* of the precise sum, or peculiar mode by which ministers are to be supported in the churches of Christ, it is manifest”—(What? That they should not be supported at all? No! but) “that we are left to free-will offerings—the sacrifice of the heart. Well, indeed,” (adds the preacher) “this becomes a religion which touches the heart” (the pocket rather he should have said) “in the tenderest place, by saying ‘Ye *know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich for our sakes, became poor, that we*’” (the priests?) “*through his poverty might be made rich!*”

Mr. B., for reasons which will afterwards appear, contends warmly (p. 24) that the support of the ministry should be strictly voluntary.

"I cannot but deeply lament, and seriously protest against the mode of supporting ministers by a seat-rent. I readily admit, for it is, indeed, incontrovertible, that, as long as men are at liberty to take a seat, or entirely abstain even from entering our doors, this cannot be called a tax. Yet it has so much of the appearance of a rate imposed, and is so unequal in its operation, that I most earnestly entreat you to supercede this, as far as possible, by providing for the support of your ministers, chiefly by voluntary subscriptions, in which, every one may give, *according as God has blessed him with property and religion.* For *your sakes* as well as your ministers I urge this change; for it is only in proportion as the support of your pastor is the spontaneous effusion of a grateful heart, anxious to render some kind return for spiritual blessings received, that it secures the approbation and blessing of the Saviour which is better than life."

A chief argument in support of voluntary contributions is, that they are likely to be more productive.

"All I ask is, that every one should discharge this duty according to the ability which God has given. This, which is so obviously right that it cannot need proof, is too general to be of much use. Accuracy in doctrine, and piety in duty, require that we should descend to particulars. *Be not satisfied then, with paying a mere seat-rent. Satan himself could not devise a more effectual way to introduce injustice, and expel from our churches, generosity to ministers, and faithfulness to God.* When three persons, of vastly different circumstances, sit in seats of the same rent, one perhaps pays rather more than he can afford, another almost as much, and the third far less. This will always be the case, in a certain degree; but then, it should be owing to their own disposition, not to the arrangements of the church. Every person should be informed, that what is given for their sitting is but a small part of the minister's income; *for this arises chiefly, if not entirely, from the voluntary subscriptions of those, who give according to their varied means, and the different degrees in which they love the cause of religion.*

"If this is the scriptural rule, how completely have many rich persons mistaken their duty! Their expenditure is, perhaps, twenty times that of a person who gives a guinea a year, and yet, they would think it wonderful if they should give twenty guineas a year. *I have known, however, more than one person in the same congregation, living in humble style, who were in the habit of giving between twenty and thirty pounds a year. Some splendid exceptions, also, I have known, who contributed fifty, and even a hundred pounds per annum. But I have known several who give ten guineas; and have seen a whole range of seats occupied by plain persons who were subscribing five guineas annually.*"

Various arguments, at considerable length, are adduced to prove that the contributions in support of these men should be liberal—we may indeed say profuse. A comparison is drawn between their labours and those of the physician and the lawyer; but these last avowedly follow a worldly profession, and they earn—and are content with—a worldly reward; whereas this "Christian ministry" represent themselves as the teachers of a religion which inculcates pure benevolence and disinterestedness;—as the followers of a lowly master, who "*had not where to lay his head;*"—as

the successors of apostles, who "*had neither two coats, nor shoes, nor yet staves;—who provided neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purses, nor scrip for their journey;*"—as, above all, the authorized messengers of heaven, though without one proof, either by argument or miracle, in favour of the divinity of their appointment. And, above all, these men (unlike the physician and the lawyer) lay claim, as a reward for their labours, to a crown of eternal glory; a sufficient compensation, one might suppose, for their exertions, without the addition of any considerable portion of this world's goods. Ministers too (it is argued by this writer) should be enabled to "mingle with persons of a *certain* rank in society;" nay, "should be enabled to gain admittance into *every* rank of society." They should be enabled to "provide for their widows and orphans"—which they would *more honestly* do by following some industrious and reputable calling. They should be enabled to exercise hospitality, and "to shew a generous spirit:"—which, however, they should do out of their own incomes, and not out of the pockets of other people; and "*such* a remuneration as the tribe of Levi enjoyed, under the ancient dispensation"—(which was a tenth part of the produce of the land, besides cities with their suburbs, and certain parts of the offerings of the Lord) "*such* a remuneration" (says Mr. Bennett) "the Christian ministry should now receive." In support of their title to which Mr. Bennett might have quoted another passage of his own sermon, in which he observes that tithes "were a part of the Levitical law of *ceremonies, which is now abolished!*"

Some, it seems, are for keeping ministers poor, because that troubles are good for them, and that they preach better under the rod; positions which, by no means, meet the full approval of Mr. Bennett. "A broken heart" (he says, p. 31) "I know is good for prayer, but it is bad for preaching. In the pulpit the joy of the Lord is our strength." Always understood that by "the joy of the Lord" a sufficient amount—and that not in seat-rent, but in voluntary contributions—is intended. The effect of good pay upon the preacher is elsewhere spoken of by Mr. B., as being in its effects a kind of spiritual *resin*, calculated to improve the music of his devotions.

"Here again" (he argues, p. 33, that is, where the people are liberal;) "we see a re-action in the moral, like that which prevails in the physical world! For that Saviour who is pleased with all that is like himself, generous and kind, rewards this spirit in the flock, by kindling in the breast of

its pastor that affection for their persons, and solicitude for their souls, which give to his thoughts *all the beauties of the bow of heaven, and to his voice all the sweetness of angelic tones*. But how can this be expected by a people whose ungenerous treatment renders it difficult for their minister to do much more than forgive their wickedness! It is reserved for a *liberal* congregation to hear strains, *like those which Paul addressed to the Phillippian church*."

We need scarcely apprise our readers that a gross misrepresentation of the sentiments of the apostle Paul is here implied. Disinterested in his objects, and only seeking the good of those he taught—"coveting no man's silver or gold," *but with his own hands ministering unto his necessities*," and even to those of others also—he would have spurned at the "*liberality*" inculcated by the professor of Rotherham college; his only "*strains*," on hearing such teachers, would have been those of indignation and unqualified disapproval. For what is it that he praises the Phillippians? that "*in his affliction*"—in "*his necessity*;" he who had suffered no other church to "*communicate with him*"—had so far honoured them as to receive assistance at their hands. That which, *as an authorized apostle of heaven*, he had a right to claim from *all*, on *all* occasions, he had submitted to receive from *one* church, on *one* occasion. And with what feelings? "*Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatever state I am therewith to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound*." And for what object? "*Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account*." But where is the authority of James Bennett and his "*associated ministers*," to the office they profess to hold? Could the apostle Paul hear these impostors, for such, in fact, they are, plead in support of their system of plunder—that "*it was reserved for a liberal congregation to hear strains like those which he addressed to the Phillippian church*," would he not feel disposed to address the libeller of his principles and character in some such language as that addressed by Peter to the mercenary sorcerer? "*Thy money perish with thee! because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money—thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God*." "*I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*."

Some curious information is supplied under the head "*The agents by which this work*" (the payment of the Christian ministry) "*is supported*."

"So important is the affair of finance, in the church of Christ, that he has

instituted an office to secure a due attention to the object." (One might have supposed from this sermon that Jesus had thought on nothing else.) "But as these officers must make their appeal to the whole body, I now attempt to show how the due support of ministers may be secured, by the deacons and by the people.

"1. The Deacons.

"It has been usually observed, that these have to attend to three tables, that of the Lord, that of the poor, and the minister's table. The two former are of high importance, and I should be happy to give stimulus and encouragement to our friends in their attention to them; but the large demands I have made on your patience, compel me to turn immediately to that part of the deacon's duty, which provides for the table of the minister. Of this, however, some, who hold the office, scarcely ever think. But I know there are others, who bear it upon their hearts continually, and in their efforts to procure their minister a suitable income, endure considerable labour, anxiety, and pain. For they show, by their own example, that, to use the office of a deacon well, to which the Scriptures promise 'a good degree, and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus;' the first grand requisite is, exalted views of their duty. It is by this means, that a man becomes a good minister. That ardent zeal, which you so much admire; at which you often re-kindle your own languishing fires; that indefatigable labour, at which you often wonder as more than mortal, are the result of the exalted, lofty views, which the man has formed of his own ministry. He has conceived to himself of such a combination of the Apostle and the Seraph, that he is continually falling below his own mark. For they, who satisfy themselves, satisfy no one else.

"In the same manner, a good deacon, *with a large and generous heart*, will often think of the handsome manner in which a whole people ought to support that one man, who is incessantly labouring for their good. *He spurns at the thought of clogging the wings of an angel*, or pressing down to earth, one who would bear others with him in his flight to heaven. A DEACON, IN ONE OF OUR CHURCHES, BROUGHT TO THE MINISTER A HUNDRED POUNDS, AS THE QUARTER'S SALARY, WITH EXPRESSIONS OF MOST AFFECTIONATE REGRET, THAT IT WAS SO LITTLE; *thus expressing what was the size and temperature of his own heart.*"

It is stated as the duty of all (as we have already seen) to give according to their varied means, and the different degrees in which they love the cause of religion.

"If this is the scriptural rule, how completely have many rich persons mistaken their duty! Their expenditure is, perhaps, twenty times that of a person who gives a guinea a year, and yet, they would think it wonderful if they should give twenty guineas a year. *I have known, however, more than one person in the same congregation, living in humble style, who were in the habit of giving between twenty and thirty pounds a year. Some splendid exceptions, also, I have known, who contributed fifty, and even a hundred pounds per annum. But I have known several who give ten guineas; and have seen a whole range of seats occupied by plain persons who were subscribing five guineas annually.*

Neither is any age, rank, or condition to be free from these contributions.

"But as each should give according to his means, great care should be taken that none be exempt. *When a child comes of age*, the parent often

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deems it prudent to assign to her a certain sum for her own expenses; that she may, by the due management of it, gradually acquire the habit of frugal care. The parent will then give a hint of the various objects, to which the money should be devoted. And should he not teach the child justice towards the person who teaches her the way of salvation? Oh, but she sits in my seat! What has that to do with her obligations to her spiritual guide? If, in other things, she pays her own expenses, should she not in this too? Or, is it only in the church of God that she is to sit in the seat of the minor, or the pauper? *Young men, also, when they commence business, should assign a proper sum to this most important object. 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.'*"

We have not time, or space, to express our indignation and abhorrence at the disgusting details of this system of "obtaining money under false pretences;" but, in the midst of all, we were not a little amused at a reason given for the poverty of many of the priestly tribe—the "pastor's just recompence," being, in many cases, withheld from him.

"I" (exclaims Mr. Bennett, p. 37) "can easily solve this mystery. It is BECAUSE MINISTERS ARE MODEST, DISINTERESTED MEN!!! I mean that ministers plead 'every good cause but their own.'" (Is Mr. Bennett himself an example of what he here means?) "Their zealous advocacy has displayed the claims of the Missionary, Bible, and Tract Societies; and called forth the liberal zeal of Christians, till all those excellent institutions are furnished 'with funds—but they cannot—will not—plead for themselves!'" "What!" exclaims some generous stranger, "and is there no one else to preach for them? Shall they be suffered to pine in poverty, *because they are modest, and devoted to the interests of others?*"

Our risibility at this amusing and modest defence of a priesthood—a defence so well borne out by their general deportment and conduct in the world—has been, however, interrupted by more than one, or two startling threats of eternal damnation, levelled against those who do not liberally provide for their ministers! For the deacon who, "with the soul of a niggard," neglects this all-essential duty, Mr. Bennett declares that he "knows of no way by which that man can escape the condemnation of Christ for robbing his minister;" (p. 38) whilst the church, who shall feel a want of inclination, rather than of ability, to support their minister, are described as having their fault "aggravated by all the weight of the Saviour's anger, 'who will call them to answer for their sin, when pastor and people shall be judged at his bar.'" (P. 30.)

That words are not wanted to expose the wicked blasphemy

—the base and irreligious spirit of threats like these—is well; for we should not easily *find* words to express our full sense of their turpitude and impiety: we pass them by, therefore, to make a final remark or two on the subject of hiring teachers. The question still recurs to us, and we wish to *impress* it deeply on the minds of our readers, where is the *authority* of these men—and under what *sanction* do they act? Have they, as they assert, a mission from heaven? Let them produce their proof and credentials. If they be the messengers of God, appointed by our great Creator to guard over our eternal interests, far be it from us to object even to their liberal maintenance; though, if they were such, we should expect to find them but little intent on the obtaining “*uncertain riches*,” and rather employed in “*laying up for themselves treasure where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; and where thieves do not break through, nor steal*.” Are not these men rather interested impostors, who make “*a gain of godliness*,” and of whom it may be truly said, whilst they are pretending to a sacred office, and a holy character, that they are “*shepherds who do feed themselves*,” and priests “*who will not shut the door for nought*?”

There are few, however, who will, *avowedly*, and in so many words, have the boldness to go so far as Mr. James Bennett; still the *principle* is the same in all; and the *practice*, we are persuaded, not much dissimilar. The dissenting priests would, no doubt, many of them, disclaim the pretensions, and disavow, at least, some of the arguments of this writer; but till we hear that they have given up the “*seat-rents*,” or returned the “*voluntary contributions*” of their hearers, we confess we shall not feel disposed to attribute a greater degree of disinterestedness, or liberality to the scholars of Hoxton, or of Hackney, than to the “*associated ministers*” issuing from Rotherham college. Some persons may object that the dissenting clergy are many of them *not* overpaid, the liberality of their congregation not being “*showered down in a profusion which is overwhelming*.” We believe this to be the fact. Spite of the much-vaunted cases of liberality, apparently held forth as lure birds by Mr. Bennett, by which to attract other similar instances of devotion, we suspect that there is much foundation for his reproaches against the people, as frequently displaying a mean, niggardly, and ungenerous spirit, towards the unhappy being whom they have dignified with the title of their teacher. The compact, we are per-

suaded, is often a wretched and a debasing one for both parties. The people surrender their equality and their rights into the hands of a hireling, who follows religion as a trade, by which he is to gain his daily bread; whilst the preacher, on his part, surrenders his independence and every upright feeling, to teach prescribed doctrines to an ignorant multitude, who dictate to him what doctrines they will buy at his hands in the first place; and then drive with him a hard and unfeeling bargain as to the price which they shall pay him for his teaching in the second. Well has Mr. Bennett (in words which deserve to be inscribed on the portal of every church and chapel where the priest officiates) well has he described the miseries attendant upon such a state of things. "Woe" (he exclaims, p. 30) "TO THE
"PASTOR AND THE FLOCK WHEN THE FIRES OF THE
"PULPIT ARE OF THAT UNHALLOWED KIND THAT ARE
"KINDLED BY THE MERCENARY DESIRE OF EARNING A
"MORSEL OF BREAD."

THE TEACHING OF JESUS.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."—*Matt.* xiii. 44.

THERE is a force and sincerity in the sayings of Jesus which carry with them the conviction and feelings of the reader; which command our admiration of his character, and confirm the authenticity of his claims to a divine mission. When the mind is deeply affected and impressed with some important truth, it becomes associated, either by comparison or contrast, with whatever passes within or without us—with the business and circumstances of life—with our own experience and that of others; and, by the reflections and conclusions thus obtained, we seek to impart to the world the vividness of our own feelings, and the high value of the principle with which our soul is inspired. The importance of that dispensation of mercy and pardon to man, of which Jesus was the harbinger and head, appears to have been a fixed and deeply-rooted principle in his mind; and this

importance he labours to enforce, sometimes by clear and impressive reasoning; and sometimes, as in the instance before us, by familiar illustration drawn from the realities of life, and so well chosen and happily expressed, as to engage the affections by their feeling, and convince the judgment by their force! These flowers of moral truth lay scattered through the gospel histories, and the lapse of ages has not diminished their freshness, or destroyed their beauty.

"The kingdom of heaven is like TREASURE hid in a field." Here the importance and excellence of Christianity is exhibited by reference to the estimation in which worldly riches are held by men; and its value is greatly enhanced by reason of the manner in which its possession is supposed to be obtained. These treasures are represented as being *found in a field*, and we have a natural picture of the joy of the fortunate individual—his caution in concealing his discovery—his readiness to part with all that he has, that he may be in a condition to become the purchaser of that field. *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field."* So then the religion which Jesus came to promulgate was so inestimable a treasure as to excite in those who should discover it the greatest joy, and a readiness to secure its possession even at the sacrifice of every thing besides; and this too upon a principle of policy—upon a mere calculation of the high advantage—the supreme value of Christianity; for though we should obtain it at the price of every earthly possession, still, like him who should sell all that he hath to purchase a field teeming with hidden treasures, we should only be parting with a lesser to secure a greater blessing. Such is the view which Jesus takes of that system which he came to establish on earth; such his mode of representing it to the world. Conscious that he had received his mission from God—impressed with its importance to man—he exhibits a just and natural description of the feelings it was calculated to inspire in every well disposed breast. He presents us with a living, breathing picture of the heart of man, when animated with the importance of divine truth, and sensible of the benignity of divine forgiveness.

The constant tenor of the teaching of Jesus goes to exhibit Christianity in this light, as a gift—a favour—a manifestation of the love of God to man. Resting, therefore, the claims of his system upon its own intrinsic worth and beauty, Jesus urges its adoption by no suspicious solicitations

—by no appeal to the passions—by no excitement of the fears—by no specious pretences—by no special pleading—but by a calm and dignified appeal to the benefits and blessings with which it is so replete to man!

This is the necessary characteristic of a religion that is true—of a system that has its origin in heaven: to be admired it is only necessary that it should be known—and when known its interest will be esteemed paramount to every other consideration. How well is this principle exemplified by the conduct and experience of those who were the first to receive, and the first to teach the Christian dispensation. Jesus, living a life of reproach and dying a death of ignominy; Paul, renouncing his kindred, his friends, his hopes of advancement—suffering “*the loss of all things that he might win Christ;*” Peter, and the other apostles, “*rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;*” the early converts, to whom it was “*given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe but also to suffer for his sake;*” these serve as critics to illustrate our text, and martyrs to adorn our cause!!

This cloud of witnesses with which we are encompassed, was not composed of designing or deluded men. Interest—*worldly* interest—suggested the rejection of what they so gladly received. Prejudice—their prejudices inclined them to a disbelief, not a belief, of the gospel. All of them had doubted, some had persecuted, that faith which they afterwards so nobly supported. But they were sincere, sober-minded men, open to truth, and willing to obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience and a convinced judgment. Some of them had seen the miracles of Jesus; others had received and been convinced of their truth from “*those who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word.*” They received Christianity, therefore, on the fullest evidence; and receiving it, they had found in it that HIDDEN TREASURE, which more than compensated for every sacrifice, privation, and suffering. Their conduct explains the parable we have been considering—the parable explains their conduct!

But is this view of the importance of the gospel dispensation a vain persuasion, or a just and well formed estimate? Is Christianity a mean and spurious gem, or a goodly pearl of great price? Let us examine it, for it challenges our scrutiny. We speak now of pure, uncorrupt Christianity—of that enlightened system of faith and practice which Jesus taught, and his apostles promulgated in their dis-

courses and writings, as left upon record in the New Testament Scriptures. These scriptures are certainly not free from those obscurities upon minor points which are incidental to all ancient writings; but in their *clear, general, and express tenor*, they place Christianity before us in the following points of view:—

As a system, communicated by the Divine Being to man, through the agency of Jesus, his appointed messenger.

As a system, separated from earthly power, and opposed to its maxims and policy.

As a system, seeking no conquests but those of conviction—no triumphs but those of truth.

As a system, proclaiming the rights of conscience, and founded on the liberty and just equality of all its adherents.

As a system, free from doubt and mystery—simple, and easy to be understood by every honest mind.

As a system, addressed to the mind, and divested of forms, ceremonies, and outward observance.

As a system, communicating to man all that is necessary for him to know of his Maker—his omnipotence, justice, and goodness.

As a system, proclaiming pardon for past transgressions, on condition of unfeigned repentance.

As a system, proposing a satisfactory assurance of future happiness as the reward of present obedience.

As a system, regulating the mind, controuling the passions, enlightening the understanding, and conducting us amid the temptations and vicissitudes of life, to virtue, security, and bliss!

How suited is such a system of revealed truth to man in all his circumstances, wants, and feelings! Is he ignorant? Christianity will instruct him! Does he wander in darkness and in doubt concerning his duties, his state, and destiny? Christianity will enlighten his path, and direct his steps to virtue and to heaven! Does he weakly submit himself to the arbitrary rule or spiritual domination of another? Christianity will emancipate his mind from slavery, and conduct him into "*the glorious liberty of the children of God!*" Is he the slave of sin looking forward to the wages of death? Christianity proclaims pardon to past transgression, and invites him to holiness and newness of life! Is he oppressed with fear at the contemplation of an angry and offended God? Christianity exhibits the Divine Being as full of mercy and of love, to whom "*anger is his strange work!*" Is he exposed to temptation and

suspended in his course from the *antagonism* of passion and of duty? Christianity will strengthen his motives to virtue, and enable him to triumph over every feeling adverse to his happiness and peace! Is he neglected, friendless, and alone in the world? Christianity adopts him into the church of God, and surrounds him with the charities and affections of the children of God! Does he suffer from the cares, the pains, the wrongs of life? Christianity brings "*life and immortality to light*;" dispels our transitory woes; resolves our doubts; discloses to us the future and bounteous plans of heaven; allows us to penetrate the grand scheme of divine benevolence; enables us to contemplate every movement in the natural and moral world, as parts of one vast design of wisdom and of love; and permits us secretly to adore his great unseen power

"By which the mighty process is maintained—
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow circling ages are as transient days;
Whose work is without labour; whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts."—*Cowper*.

Divine gift! Inestimable treasure! well did the great teacher of Christianity esteem the sterling value of his system as the most powerful inducement to its reception; well did he liken it to "*treasure found in a field*;" and if he who had discovered a perishable treasure joyfully sold all that he had to possess it, how much more dearly ought we to estimate THE ETERNAL TREASURES OF RELIGION AND OF TRUTH?

THE DOCTRINE OF THE FALL OF MAN DISPROVED:

By an Explanation of the early part of the Book of Genesis,

ESSAY I.

THERE is not, perhaps, any part of the scriptures more deserving our serious attention than the first three chapters of Genesis; nor any that has been more perverted, or so little understood. The whole superstructure of that system of superstition, which now passes by the name of Christian,

appears founded, indeed, on mistaken or perverted views of the transactions recorded in these chapters, or on inferences supposed to be drawn from them in the apostolic writings; it being imagined that what the writer of the Book of Genesis left incomplete, on the subject of the fall of man, original sin, redemption by vicarious suffering, &c. has been more fully supplied in the letters of the apostle Paul.

Of the various doctrines forming this heterogeneous mass of confusion, absurdity, and blasphemy, it is not my intention, in this place, to say much; but this I will lay down as a postulatam from which we may safely argue, that, however strangely it may prove the apostles to have been misunderstood, no representation of theirs can be taken as meaning, or communicating any thing more than what is actually contained in the writings from which they receive their facts, and draw their inferences; none of them professing to give any further information on these subjects than that which they gather from these original writings. If, therefore, upon a fair and candid examination, I can make it appear that the original passages in the early chapters of Genesis refer to our first parents—and to them alone—without any allusion whatever to their posterity, there will then be no ground for asserting that man, by nature, fell from a state of immortality, and that the whole human race have become corrupt, and subject to eternal condemnation, by the sin of Adam their federal head; the whole fabric which superstition has erected upon this weak foundation, as a consequence, falling to the earth, and becoming crumbled with the dust.

The nature of this concise history has been variously understood by different individuals. Some, finding it difficult to explain as literal, so as to suit their creeds, have considered it as a moral allegory; others have supposed, that although it should be taken literally as to the facts recorded, yet, that it contains hidden mysteries—big with important results—affecting not only our first parents, but the whole human race; and that not in this world alone, but throughout all eternity. To me it appears that it is a simple narration of events concerning our first parents; exactly such as might naturally have been expected to happen to individuals so circumstanced; events capable of the most rational explanation, and calculated to exhibit the Deity to our view in the most amiable and endearing light—as a God of infinite wisdom and unbounded benevolence. And, in support of this my view of these much-disputed chapters, let it be remembered that of all the doctrines

founded by the self-named orthodox upon this history, not one of them is directly stated therein; and scarcely any one of them can be said to be capable of fair deduction therefrom. Not one word is there said, or implied, of man's being created a superior and immortal being; not one word is said of his fall, by nature, from that state; no mention is made of the entrance of the devil into the serpent, in order to tempt Eve; no allusion, however distant, occurs to the punishment, by eternal torments, of the sins of his posterity, in consequence of their fall through the sin of Adam. All this is matter of inference alone, with regard to some points; but as to others, and those the most important, as well as the most numerous, they rest upon the mere assertion of their professors, who gratuitously assume *that* as being meant by the writer of Genesis, which best accords—not with the evident sense of the author—but with their own pre-conceived creeds and opinions. In their defence they will plead, perhaps, the brevity and obscurity of these ancient, these primitive writings. There is force in this plea, but how should we act in such a case? Not, surely, by imagining, theoretical, fanciful, and mysterious doctrines; and then aiming to support them by disjointed facts, or obscure passages; but by endeavouring to apply rational and correct principles of criticism; by looking to the evident aim and object of the writer; by bearing in mind the circumstances, the age, and even the language under and in which his book was composed; by carefully noting the situation and the objects of those beings whose plans are described, or whose actions are recorded; in short, by weighing probabilities, and being determined according to evidence; taking for absolute facts only such as are plainly narrated; and, when we are left to inference, forming such conclusions as are most rational in themselves, and as may best accord with the situation of the parties and the general tenor of the writings.

It is by these principles that I shall endeavour to govern myself in the following remarks, intended to elucidate the early part of the Book of Genesis. My views, as a whole, will, I trust, be approved by every rational lover of Christianity; yet should it appear to the reader of these remarks that some positions are unfounded, and some inferences unsupported, let it be remembered that the *orthodox* views of this narration are both these to an infinitely greater extent; and let it further be borne in mind that I do not confidently advance any sentiments on this subject, at least in all its details, as

the undoubtedly correct view of the matter; I simply give such views and suggestions as, after a careful application of the before-named principles, appear to my own mind the most probable; and I leave it to the reader to decide for himself, and either to adopt my explanation, or to suggest a more rational one of his own.

To proceed then, upon these principles, to the subject. This book, written for the use of the Israelitish people, and not for that of our times, has an evident relation to their views and situation. Its main object, particularly in these early chapters, is to teach them the existence of one only God; and, by shewing them that every thing originally sprung from that source, and that all events had subsequently been guided by his wise will and directing providence, to induce them to abstain from idolatry—to adopt his worship, and submit to his dispensations. Preparatory then to his giving the Jews, with this view, the history of man, it became necessary that the writer should give them some ideas of that theatre on which man was to be the great, the all-important actor; he does not, indeed, carry them to the contemplation of the universe; that was not necessary to his purpose, nor (even had he himself possessed the knowledge) could the people for whom he wrote have comprehended him, had he done so.

The first chapter of Genesis, to the twenty-fifth verse, appears merely the machinery with which to introduce the great object of the writer. The division of the work of creation into days was probably intended to convey the idea that every thing was produced in its regular order, and all for wise and gracious purposes. The words, “*In the beginning God created,*” &c. do not necessarily imply that the world was made out of nothing; but this might be, and most likely was, as Dr. Geddes suggests,* “the rescue or restoration of a pre-existent mass of matter from a state of darkness and desolation, to make it a fit and comfortable abode for the beings intended to be placed therein.” Admitting this to be the case, the earth might have been a fit habitation for all other animals many ages before it would become proper as a residence for man; a circumstance which would fully account for those organic remains, and other geological phenomena, which, appearing irreconcilable with the Mosaic account of the creation,

* See Dr. Geddes' Preface, p. 2, for further illustrations.

have furnished a handle for sceptics, and have puzzled the Christian and the philosopher in their endeavours to explain.*

Having briefly narrated the creation of the earth, the writer proceeds to his real object—the formation of man; who, being the most important creature, his creation is surrounded with every circumstance that can inspire a true notion of his dignity. Thus, whereas all other beings are represented as appearing at the immediate command of their creator, this most excellent work of Deity, for whom all other things were made, and to whom all are to yield obedience, is represented as being the subject of deliberation and consultation before he is produced. “*And God said let us make man in our own image,*” (or as our representative in governing the whole) “*after our likeness; and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth;*” when, apparently as if the result of this council and deep deliberation, it is said (v. 27) “*so God created man in his own image, male and female created he them.*” Whether they were both created at this time and together it is not easy to determine; it is not improbable that they were so, and that they were separated from each other till the proper and appointed time arrived for bringing them together. Thence, to the end of the chapter, follows the charter, before spoken of, which gives to man the dominion over the whole earth, and all that it contained. After having given this succinct and summary account of the whole creation, the Deity is represented as beholding, with complacency, the world which he had made, and pronouncing the whole to be very good. “*Thus ended,*” it is said, “*the sixth day;*” and God is represented as resting on the seventh day. This circumstance must tend to prove that the days are not to be taken as literal days, but that the words are used only as a medium by which to give an idea of the regularity and order in which every thing was produced; since we know that fatigue or rest can be only used as figures of speech when applied to the Deity.

The writer having brought the work to a conclusion,

* A fact which would tend strongly to support this position is, that amongst these numerous remains of animals, both known and unknown, at this time, none have been discovered of the human form.

observes, at the beginning of the chapter, "*these are the generations of the heavens,*" (atmospheric airs, or the expanse) "*and of the earth, when they were created; in the day*" (here one day is put for the whole six) "*in which the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.*" He then, as his main object, proceeds to treat on man, and enters into further particulars respecting his nature and formation, previous to a narration of the dealings of God towards him. "*And the Lord God formed MAN out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.*" God formed man out of the "dust of the ground"—of frail and perishable materials, and causing the air to enter into his nostrils, his lungs became inflated, and his heart began to beat, putting the blood of his whole frame in circulation; thus man, from being a lifeless form,* became a living, moving, soul or person.

The man being thus complete and capable of action, three things would necessarily demand the attention of his creator. First, To guard and secure his existence. Secondly, To fit his mind for the situation in which he was immediately to be placed. And, Thirdly, To improve his understanding, so as to capacitate him for his future situation and employment. And, in going through this short history, we shall perceive that all these ends were provided for, and that in a way, which must call forth our love and admiration of that benevolent being who had brought man into existence, and who watched over him with such proof of his

* It is not said that God made the body of the man, and then infused into it a living soul; but that God made man—the whole man—who, when he had received the breath of life, became a living soul or person. Much stress is laid upon the occurrence of the mere word *soul*, in both the Old and New Testament, yet nothing can be more inconclusive than an argument of such a nature. A reference even to the common Concordance, by Cruden, will shew the reader that "*this word in scripture, especially in the style of the Hebrew, is very equivocal;*" and this writer, himself an advocate for the immortality of the soul of man, allows that the same word is applied to beasts, (Gen. i. 24) to the whole body—to the life—to living bodies—and even to dead bodies; and surely the writer could not have meant to speak of dead immortal souls! Thus the writer of Genesis speaks of Adam's becoming, when the breath of life was breathed into him, a living soul, or person. He was before a man in form, but he became now a living man. Thus a clock is a complete machine when first made; but when wound up it becomes a clock in motion. Thus a steam engine may be complete in itself, but it is not till the steam is introduced, and the operations of expansion and condensation commence, that the powers of the engine are called into action.

loving kindness. But, before entering upon this part of subject, it may be necessary to make some few remarks to what must necessarily be the capacity and circumstances of this newly-made man; we may otherwise be led into some of those mistaken notions which have already led many into error; and by laying down false premises betrayed into erroneous conclusions.

Many have supposed that Adam was created, not perfect in form and in the full possession of all his animal powers, but that he was equally perfect in mind and character, and have thence been led to draw the most absurd and dangerous conclusions. Nothing in the history is said of these things: we are merely informed that he was made man, and had the functions of life given to him. With regard to his mind, as we take it to be clear that man has no ideas but those which he receives through the medium of his senses, must not the mind of Adam have necessarily been a mere blank? A man in stature—and the same probably in the organization of his intellectual faculties—could he have been more than a mere child in experience and knowledge? As such a being then it is that we are to examine the conduct of God towards him, if we wish to have a just conception of its tendency, or to judge correctly of its propriety. Adam then is a man without knowledge or experience; and, of course, exposed to every danger, whether from ferocious animals, or poisonous fruits, or herbs. What might we expect that a wise and benevolent being would do to protect such a man from destruction? We turn to the history, and find (ch. ii. v. 8) that “the Lord God (had) planted a garden, and there he put the man whom he had formed; and out of the ground (had)* made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight or good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and (even) “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” God having thus prepared a place suited to his circumstances, where there grew nothing but what was pleasing to the sight and good for food; where, from his ignorance, he could be in no danger of plucking poisonous fruits, or any thing deleterious, all such having been carefully excluded from the place of his residence; then “the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it.” Thus by employment, at once pleasant and appropriate,

* This should be, according to good critics, in the past tense.

teaching him habits of industry, and a knowledge of useful fruits and herbs, so that when the time arrived when he was to go forth into the world he might be enabled to distinguish those things which were fit for food, from others with which he was not acquainted. This point, so important for the security of the life and person of our first parent, being gained, the next step which reason would dictate, would be to take means for the improvement of his mind; and as, from the paucity of his ideas, and the very peculiar circumstance in which he was placed, but few moral lessons could be suitable, we should expect to find that his first lesson would be simple, and such as a being like him could be expected to comprehend; to teach him probably that he was a dependent creature, and that he owed obedience to the being who had given him existence, and had so munificently provided every thing which would make that existence a blessing. Accordingly we find (verses 16, 17) that the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "*of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good or evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" As though he had said—I give you full liberty to eat of every tree but one; abstinence from that one I command, as a test of your obedience; it will be to you a tree whereby you will have the knowledge whether you are doing evil or good; and as I impose on you only this simple restriction, a disobedience to it will aggravate the offence; and, in the very day you eat you shall surely forfeit your existence. Let it be remembered that we have no evidence whatever that there was any thing in the quality of the tree, either good or evil, capable in itself of destroying or preserving life; the name, we may therefore fairly infer, was given it because of the consequences resulting from their eating or refraining. There can be little doubt but that the Deity knew that they *would* eat the forbidden fruit; but it was a part of his benevolent plan, thereby to teach the difference between good and evil, and to make the way easy for that change of circumstances which, for their own benefit and that of their posterity, it was necessary they should experience. As well, therefore, as being a tree of knowledge it was also to them a tree of life; inasmuch as their eating or refraining was to be the means either of preserving or forfeiting that life which had been given to them.

Thus protected in person, and instructed in mind, the next natural and necessary step, both for the comfort of the

individual and the peopling of the earth, is to procure him a partner of his own species. We find, therefore, (v. 18) that "*the Lord God said it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him;*" or, as the margin reads, *as before him*; he having, no doubt, observed that all other animals had their mates, for in the next verse it is represented that "*God caused every living thing to pass before him,*" either all that were created, in vision probably; or, if in reality, only such domestic animals as were in the garden, "*and that he gave names to them; but for Adam*" (among them all) "*there was not found an help meet for him.*" This procession, no doubt, was benevolently intended to teach him a moral lesson, and to call forth his wishes for a mate of his own species. This wish for a partner being strongly excited in the mind of Adam, and God having determined to fulfil that desire, we may reasonably expect that the fulfilment would be accompanied with all those circumstances which, by giving *eclat*, as it were, to the event, would teach him the close and endearing nature of the connexion which should subsist between man and wife, and inspire in his bosom feelings of love and affection towards the female to whom he was to be united. The history most amply fulfils all our expectations on this head; in this, as in every other transaction of Deity with Adam, we see a pursuance of the same wise and benevolent plan, in order to enlarge his mind, call forth his best dispositions, and perfect his character. "*The Lord God*" (we are told, v. 21) "*caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept, and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and of the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man, and Adam said this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.*" This, I would suggest, was probably a dream of Adam's, produced during "*the deep sleep which the Lord God had caused to fall upon him;*" and intended to convey to him an idea of the closeness of that tie by which he was to be bound to the woman; and strongly to excite in his mind feelings of tenderness and affection towards a being who was thus, as it were, a part of himself, being, indeed, "*bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.*"

It may here be remarked, by the way, that although, from the brevity of the history, events are necessarily spoken of in rapid and immediate succession; yet that it by no means follows that they really occurred so closely together,

it being possible, for aught we know to the contrary, that months, and even years, may have intervened between some of the events thus spoken of.

That the actual formation of the woman took place at the same time with that of the man, we have already seen some occasion to conclude; though why, or for what length of time, they were afterwards kept apart, can only be a matter of reasonable conjecture. Is it not probable that a considerable period of time elapsed, and that both the man and the woman, in this complete infancy of their intellect, were each separately undergoing, by the situation in which they were placed, such a course of moral discipline, as should prepare them for that connexion and for those circumstances, both of enjoyment and of trial, which were necessarily consequent upon their union?

When a construction then so consistent with the character of Deity—with his wisdom, his justice, and his benevolence—can be so fairly put upon passages of scripture like the present, why should we turn a deaf ear to such an interpretation, and listen, in preference, to the pernicious—the unfounded, and even the impious—the blasphemous doctrines which are attempted by the most forced interpretations to be deduced therefrom? Why should we go out of the way so to render the scriptures as that they should represent the wise and benevolent author of all things as forming plans which are weak, futile, and cruel in their nature and effects, as being, indeed, a wrathful and a revengeful tyrant? For such he is surely represented in the doctrines I have referred to at the commencement of this Essay—those of the fall of Adam; of the temptation by the devil; and of the condemnation of the whole human race in consequence of original or birth sin, arising from the disobedience of their first parent. What I have hitherto stated has been in the way of introduction, of explanation only; in a second Essay I propose proceeding to a consideration of the temptation of Eve, and what is commonly regarded as “the fall of man.” I trust that, to every rational mind, I shall be able to shew that no such doctrine is here taught, or communicated; the whole being a simple narrative of a single fact in the life of Adam, relating to himself alone, and in no way affecting the nature or deciding the fate of his posterity: and in some future remarks, I may, perhaps, take occasion to carry on the subject still further, by a reference to the New Testament writings, with a view to shew that there also the same doctrines are equally without foundation and authority.

T.

L

WISDOM.

A PARAPHRASE.—PROVERBS, CHAP. 8th.

HEAR me, ye sons of men! 'tis Wisdom cries,
 Hear! if ye seek for happiness—be wise!
 In the high places, and the city's gate,
 Within your streets, and at your doors, I wait.

Ye simple-minded, hear me! fools attend!
 Respect the counsels of a heaven-sent friend;
 Receive my precepts, for my tongue shall speak
 Truth like the beams that o'er the morning break.

Seek Wisdom and not rubies; learn to hold
 Instruction dearer than the brightest gold;
 Mine is true wealth, and durable; 'twill last
 When the brief treasures of the earth are past.

The paths of peace are mine; the ways of truth;
 Tread them betimes—mark them from earliest youth.
 Evil and pride—the false, deceitful part,
 Are vile abominations to my heart.

Those that love me I love—that seek me find;
 Mine the creations of the forming mind.
 Counsel is mine, and justice; skill and thought;
 By me the head has planned—the hand has wrought.

Who findeth me finds life, and shall obtain
 The blessings of an everlasting reign—
 God's love and favour. He whose froward breath
 Scorns me, but wrongs himself and covets death.

I was from everlasting—e'er the sun
 His joyous course of glory had begun;
 Or e'er the earth was born—or mountain-steep
 Rose o'er the borders of the tide-bound deep.

Beside his awful throne, at God's right hand,
I stood, when all things *were* at his command;
When he prepared the heavens, and called to birth
The mountains and the waters of the earth;

When he the clouds established; bid the sea
Roll at his word—and pause at his decree—
Then was I present still. 'Twas awful night.
“Let there be light,” he said, “and there was light.”

How beautiful that first of mornings broke,
When Nature from her dream of darkness woke;
When the green earth was glad; and her young hills
Poured, fertile, o'er the plains their thousand rills;

Then was I present with him; his delight;
Beside his throne—rejoicing in his sight.
Now, therefore, hear me, children! blessed are they—
When Wisdom speaks—who listen and obey.



THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD OPPOSED TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.—ESSAY II.

OF all the subjects which divide the philosophical and religious world there is scarcely one in which the contending parties have made less advances towards each other than that upon which we are now writing. This arises from the general absence of some mutually admitted principles of argument—one party being content to fix their abode in the regions of fancy, without being guided either by an observance of nature or a reliance upon revelation; the other, availing themselves of one or both of these sources, feel fortified in their conclusions by experiment, by experience, and by scripture. Ranging ourselves, as our reason compels us to do, with the latter class, we design at once to proceed to the subject, by endeavouring to demonstrate—THAT LIFE AND MIND ARE THE RESULTS OF ORGANIZATION; and if we are successful in establishing this position,

the controversy upon the immateriality and immortality of the soul will terminate. Here, then, we take our stand; and we are boldly—we will not say judiciously—met, by no less an authority than the representative of Cambridge University, in the person of their “Christian Advocate.” This writer, seeing that a middle course could not be pursued without certain discomfiture, and being driven to what the more wary supporters of this system have hitherto cautiously evaded, is compelled to admit, that “*if the point of life being dependant upon organization be once admitted, the immortality of the soul, and every thing which distinguishes man from the grass on which he treads, is utterly annihilated.*” (Rennell 89.) We receive this concession with perfect satisfaction, and will make it the starting post of our argument. If we succeed in proving, that “life and mind are dependent upon organization,” our adversaries admit that the doctrine of the soul’s immortality is “annihilated.”

We adhere to Newton’s well known principles of philosophizing, which were quoted in the former Essay, that to every effect there must be a cause, but that that cause must be an adequate one, and that when such is discovered, causes must not be multiplied. Now we look at man, of whom we read in the scriptures that he is made of the dust of the earth; that his Maker “*breathed into him the breath of life,*” or, by causing respiration, put his lungs into motion; that, having done so, this machine became a soul or person;* and that, finally, he will return unto the dust from whence he came.

We observe man at his birth, and during the first months of his existence, and we perceive the first faint dawns of his mind; but they are as weak and infantile as the body: “As the senses acquire their power the cerebral jelly becomes firmer; the mind gradually strengthens, and advances with the body from childhood to puberty, and becomes adult when the developement of the frame is completed.” (Lawrence.) When the organization, which we have thus traced in its progressive advancement, becomes perfected, then the mind, as it regards its vigour and its natural powers, is also perfected. We observe this machine in infancy—in manhood—in second childhood; we see its thinking powers grow, mature, and decay—with the growth, the maturity, the decay of the organization. We see the

* See the note to page 141 of the present Number.

affections of the mind influencing and controuling the actions of the body; and we observe, on the other hand, the diseases of the body controuling and influencing the affections of the mind. We attend "this quintessence of dust," this "paragon of animals," to the awful termination of his worldly career, and we there witness an extinction of being, not in body only but also in mind; not of a part but of the WHOLE MAN: we view *him* who had, perhaps, once delighted the senate or governed nations, rapidly undergoing disorganization, and literally returning unto the dust from whence he came. We know that during his life the able exercise of his mental powers have been either encouraged or repressed, as education, correct principles, and mental and bodily activity may have been promoted or neglected. We perceive that the possession of full vigour is but of short duration either in mind, or in body; and that with the decay of organization, the mental powers decline, both being extinguished by death; and, finally, we know that life—nay more, that mind—never has been known to exist, except in connexion with organization.

What do we infer, or rather what does our reason compel us to conclude, from all this succession of phenomena? The existence of an immaterial soul, having no quality in common with, while it acts upon, the body? Or rather that all these never-failing effects can only be explained by organization? Such facts, supported as they are by constant experience, have driven the defenders of an immortal soul upon the horns of a dilemma, either to admit that life and thought result from the modification and organization of matter, or that matter can, by no possibility, be made capable of these manifestations. They have chosen the latter: and, upon their own conditions we are prepared to meet them; conscious that this attempt to *degrade* the capabilities of matter is inseparable from their system. Yet—we are tempted to exclaim—what human being has ever existed who could discover to us what matter can, or what it cannot, be rendered capable of, by the great Architect of the universe!

Mr. Rennell, certainly, may be regarded as an exception, for he makes short work of the powers of omnipotence, by fearlessly asserting, the total "impossibility of thought" "being the result of any organization." Yet Locke (an immaterialist also) does not appear to have entertained such a low estimation of matter; or, at least, he exercised greater caution in pronouncing relative to it—of what it was and what it was not capable. "Solidity constitutes the essence

“ of matter : whatever *modifies solidity is matter* : if God “ cannot join (or, as we would say, organize) portions of “ matter together by means inconceivable to us, we must “ deny the existence and being even of matter itself.” These are inconsistencies, as to the *capacity* of matter, which we leave its detractors to reconcile. Still we have before us another instance, furnished by a modern Scotch writer (Barclay) who, although a believer in an immaterial spirit, yet is compelled, from philosophical experiments, to allot to matter no mean capabilities :—“ Could it have “ been thought that sulphur, which is an inflammable substance, and oxygen, so necessary to the maintenance of “ flame, could have formed an acid which actually lowers “ the temperature of snow ; or that particles of heat could “ have been concealed in the coldest bodies :—*let us not, “ therefore, presume that the living qualities of animals are “ different from the qualities of matter.*” (26.) Here are these supporters of the same system, one of whom denies to matter of itself the possibility of manifesting life, even in its lowest and most degraded form ; the other that it is capable of modification and organization ; and the third admits precisely the point for which we are contending—for it is, in truth, presumption to assert “ that the living “ qualities of animals are different from the qualities of “ matter.” A concession to this extent is what we did not anticipate ; for it more than compromises, by distinctly committing, the immaterial hypothesis ; yet it is, perhaps, the only rational conclusion at which an observer of nature could well arrive.

This conviction, we find, has been so strongly operative, that in a work, not by an official agent, but by a member of Cambridge University, the writer, Mr. Macleay, (an immaterialist) defines “ *life*,” to be expressive of that faculty “ which “ certain combinations of material particles possess ; like “ gravity and elasticity, we know life only by its effects ; “ by them we conclude that it has not a *distinct* (or separate) “ *existence* ; it is to the organized body what the expansion “ of steel is to the watch, or that of steam to the engine ; “ but if we ask what is expansion ? what is life ? WE CAN GET “ NO ANSWER BUT A RECITAL OF THEIR EFFECTS.” These views of matter, and also of life, as proceeding from, and depending upon, organization, must be seen to be destructive of the doctrine of an immortal soul ; for the strong—indeed the only—argument in its support has hitherto rested upon the total impossibility of matter possessing life and thought

without the residence of an immaterial spirit. And so essential to the system is this *extreme* position seen to be, by its more acute defenders, that we find in a Review of the works of Lawrence and Rennell, the following undisguised statement of immaterialism:—"Wherever we see life, we will at once admit the existence of an immaterial principle, "whether in the European, the negro, or the oyster."

Here we close upon our antagonists; and we ask them, in the name of Christianity, of what "*peculiar*," and of what high value, as motives to moral and accountable agents, can a futurity be which rests upon the same basis, and which is shared in a proportionate degree by the flea and the oyster. Still we hail this concession as a grand point gained in the controversy; the more so, from its being one which the older immaterialists would rarely admit; they were pressed with the contradictions inseparable from their system, as demonstrated by the inferior parts of animal creation, in which it was shown that if their own definitions of matter were correct, then, as a consequence, a mouse or a mackerel must be composed of something more than matter; that if the mental powers of man could not, by possibility, be the result of organization, then, by analogy, the sagacity of the dog, the camel, and the elephant, can only be accounted for, from their also possessing immaterial souls.

This open avowal of the Reviewers is of the more importance, because it enables us to concentrate the argument, and to demonstrate that, if *their position* be a correct one, we must confer immaterial souls even upon comparatively more degraded parts of creation, than that of their own selection—the oyster; and even proceed, if not quite, yet almost, to the vegetable kingdom: for, according to the naturalist, *Lamarck*, the passage from the most perfect plant, to the least perfect animal, is quite insensible; and "where organization is the most simple, animals approach nearest to plants;" and but little superiority to the vegetable can be discovered in those aquatic animals which are described by *Macleay*, as masses of homogeneous and sensible pulp, through which there is a sort of nervous system. There are atoms too of such an ambiguous nature as to be difficult to account for on the principle of animal life. The animalcula, also, which exist in myriads, even in the vegetable part of creation; the intestinal worms which are said to grow in the liver of sheep; the thousand species of lice, and such peculiar to some plant or animal; yet all these have life, and the means of existence; thus placing the consistent

immaterialist in one, of two situations—either to renounce his doctrine, or to submit, unconditionally, to the hypothesis of the Review before quoted, and of the Cambridge Advocate—that life cannot, even in the instances above given, result from organization; and that, consequently, the minutest atom of animal life is inhabited by an immaterial soul. To us the attenuated form of evil spirits—which are said to be so minute that 20,000 of them can dance a sarabrand on the point of a needle, without jostling each other—is rationality compared with such monstrous doctrines. But to have, in plain language, from such parties, *such* a concession, we hold to be most important to the argument. We are willing to allow that it is the system, and not the advocates, which has yielded us this essential service; for although some of the ancient defenders of the soul confined its possession to man, *because* of his mental powers, yet, this position having been overthrown by reference to the sagacity of the brute tribes, the parties whose arguments have had any claim to consistency, feel themselves, compelled either to acknowledge the materiality and mortality of man; or, the immateriality and immortality of the whole animal creation!

But it is said, by a “Medical Student of Oxford University,” and also by other similarly inconsistent immaterialists, that the Cambridge Advocate, and his supporters, have admitted, as well as contended for, too much; and that mere “life” may be conceded to matter—that it may be organized; but that mental manifestations—that reasoning powers—bespeak the want and necessity of spiritual agency, and that such agency is *confined* to human beings; *that* being the cause of their passions, as well as the foundation of their immortality. We meet this position precisely upon the same principles of argument as we have done the foregoing; and are prepared to shew that if *mind* be the criterion by which the argument for an immaterial immortal soul is to be tried, a reference to the brute creation must destroy this branch of the system; for it will be found that the exercise of mental powers, of memory, of deliberation, and of extraordinary sagacity is not confined to man: in proof of this we might instance the oft-repeated cases of the sagacity of the elephant, the talent displayed by the ourang outang, the art and calculation of the fox, the ingenuity and ability of the beaver; which latter animals, in addition to the skill displayed in the erection of their huts, and laying out of their villages, are said to exist under a well regulated, democratical form of government!

Instances too occur in animals of inferior estimation. Of the carrier pigeons many singular circumstances are related. Pliny states that Brutus employed pigeons during the siege of Modena, to keep up a correspondence with the besieged; and in the east they are now used in conveying information to and from the several seats of government. The Ettrick Shepherd, Mr. Hogg, relates of one of his dogs, that when he was "scarcely a year old, and knew so little of herding, that he had never turned sheep in his life; but as soon as he discovered that it was his duty to do so, and that it obliged me, I can never forget with what anxiety and eagerness he learned his different evolutions; he would try every way, deliberately, till he found out what I wanted him to do; and when once I made him *understand* a direction, he never mistook or forgot it. Well as I knew him he often astonished me, for when hard pressed, in accomplishing the task which was set him, he had expedients of the moment, that bespoke a *great share of the reasoning faculty*." The ass, in descending the Alps—the mule, in traversing the Andes, exhibit extraordinary powers of memory and of deliberation; and, in their swiftest motion, when they might seem to have lost all government of themselves, they follow the windings of the road, having previously settled in their minds the rout they are to follow, and take every precaution for their safety; hence, according to Humbolt, the mountaineers judge, not of the animal whose step is the surest, but him "*who reasons best*."

We now ask, in what situation do these instances put the supporter of the *qualified* doctrine of an immaterial and immortal soul in man, as they clearly demonstrate that memory, deliberation and judgment are possessed by the brute creation; the position which confers spiritual agency on man, *because of these powers*, being, consequently, untenable? And (except by abandoning their whole system) its supporters cannot avoid being driven to the same concession which they have condemned in Mr. Rennell and his followers: in other words, that the ape, equally with the philosopher, has an immaterial soul. And this concession, by the way, does not appear to have been one either hastily or willingly made; its consequences would seem to have been rightly appretiated, as we discover from its supporters that they are anxiously alive to the effect which it must have upon their argument. One of these parties, indeed, (the Review before referred to) as a guide to our paths, tells us that although brutes are animated

by spiritual beings, yet that "an immaterial spirit is not, *as such*, necessarily immortal." We seize upon this new concession, and contend, that if it be not in its own nature immortal, then the *very principle of their argument*, in support of future existence, is shaken to its very foundation. The old lawgivers, indeed, in the immaterial school, always contended that "immaterial spirits *were necessarily* immortal; and that, "they were immortal *because* they were immaterial." If we are to have a classification of immaterial souls, some mortal and some immortal, who shall assure us that the soul of man, if he possess one, is not as mortal as his body? And who shall extricate us from the endless labyrinth of doubt and uncertainty into which, by such an hypothesis, we should be plunged? Another writer, as a lamp to our feet, apprises us that while all living beings are inhabited by immaterial souls, yet that it is probable man alone has succeeded in gaining those which will not die. The means, by which to apply the test of immortality to these spirits, we are not supplied with—at least, not from the scriptures; but our *Christian* guide and "Advocate" knowing how essential such information must be to his argument, has *consistently and rationally* taken us back—not to Jesus, but to Plato!!

"The very *desire* of immortality, which distinguishes the human soul, is, of itself, a POWERFUL argument for the attainment of its object; for there is no desire of the human mind which man has not some general means of fulfilment; as, therefore, in man, the existence of this rational desire is a strong presumption in favour of its gratification; so absence of the desire in the animal is ALMOST a proof, that, from its very nature, it is incapable of immortality." (Rennell 115.)

This argument, while it is not a novel one, is yet so admirably suited to our purpose, that we cannot let it pass; it, in fact, amounts, on the part of the Advocate, to throwing up his brief. We are, therefore, perfectly content to take this writer upon his own shewing; contending, as we do, that the mere existence of a "desire," in the mind of man, is not a "presumption" at all, much less a strong one, "in favour of its gratification." We might instance the "desire" for riches and for power—desires these which, doubtless, "distinguish" man from "the animal;" which but, "strongly," and "universally," as they unquestionably exist, are yet found to furnish, in their results, any thing rather than a rational and confident assurance of their gratification: but we pass by these and a numerous catalogue of desires,

which belong "peculiarly" to the human race, and which are but very partially gratified, for the purpose of instancing one desire in particular—that which, cherished equally by the peasant and by the philosopher, by the king and by the beggar, yet never has been gratified—we mean the desire for a longer continuance of life than that naturally allotted to man. Now, as this desire truly is "universal," is "rational," and does "distinguish man from the animal," what reason can the "Advocate," upon his own shewing, give, not merely for its non-accomplishment, but that the "desire" itself, deeply as it is rooted in the human heart, does not add *one moment* to our present existence? yet, if his position were a just one, this "desire" having all the requisite qualifications, man would not require futurity, for he would be immortal in the present state of things.

Thus have we stated the three several points, in which are comprehended the creeds of all classes of immaterialists; they appear to be, First, That matter cannot of itself possess life; and, consequently, in its very lowest possible state of animation, there must reside within it an immaterial soul.

Secondly, That matter may be so organized as to have mere life, but not mental qualities.

Thirdly, That immaterial souls are not, as such, necessarily immortal.

This task we have performed gratuitously, and not because it is really called for by our argument; for, in truth, it is imperative upon these parties to demonstrate—First, why, and on what principle, the organization of matter is incapable of performing the functions of animal life. Secondly, if an immaterial and immortal principle be necessary to account for the manifestation of a mind in a child, or in an idiot, (Lord Portsmouth for instance) why is it not equally necessary to the dog or the horse. Thirdly, if they concede it to these animals, why they deny it to the mouse and to the maggot. And, finally, if mortal souls be allotted to brutes, and immortal to man, then they ought to furnish us with some certain criterion in *soulology*, (if we may coin a word) by which we shall be justified in depriving so many millions of immaterial souls of their pre-supposed natural immortality.

In our next number we design submitting some of the facts connected with the brain, the circulation of the blood, and the medical treatment of insanity, and other diseases, all tending to the same point; and from the whole of which we feel persuaded that we shall succeed in establishing our

first position, "THAT LIFE AND MIND ARE THE RESULT OF ORGANIZATION." Having thus cleared the way, by proving that man is by nature a material and a mortal being, we then propose turning our attention to revelation, and shewing that his hopes of futurity rest solely upon the scriptural doctrine of A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

PRIESTS.

"THUS we have heard, readers, how many shifts and evils the PRELATES invented to save their ill-got booty; and if it be true, as in scripture it is foretold, that pride and covetousness are the sure marks of those false prophets which are to come, then boldly conclude these to be as great seducers as any of the latter times. For between this and the judgment day do not look for any arch-deceivers, who, in spite of reformation, will use more craft and less shame, to defend their love of the world and their ambition, than these prelates have done."—*Milton's Apology.*

"UPON this open, avowed attempt, in almost the whole bench of bishops, to destroy the church, I resolved to have no more commerce with persons of such prodigious grandeur; who, I feared, in a little time, would expect me to kiss their slipper. It is happy for me that I know the persons of very few bishops; and it is my constant rule never to look into a coach—by which I avoid the terror that such a sight might strike me with. - - - I call God to witness that I did then, and do now, and shall for ever, firmly believe that every bishop who gave his vote for either of these bills, did it with no other view, *bating further promotion*, than a premeditated design, from the spirit of ambition and love of arbitrary power, to make the whole body of the clergy their slaves and vassals, until the day of judgment, under the load of poverty and contempt. I have no room for more charitable thoughts, except for those who will answer now, as they must at that dreadful day, that what they did was out of perfect ignorance, want of consideration, *hope of future promotion, an argument not to be conquered*, or the persuasion of cunninger brethren than themselves."—*Swift.*

"THE PRIEST is not a negative character, he is something positive, and disagreeable. He is not, like the quaker, distinguished from others *merely* by singularity of dress and manner; but he is distinguished from others by pretension to superiority over them. His faults arise from his boasted exemption from the opposite vices, and he has one vice running through all his others—HYPOCRISY. He is proud with an affectation of humility; bigoted from a pretended zeal for truth; greedy with an ostentation of active contempt for the things of this world; professing self-denial, and always thinking of self-gratification. As he cannot be armed at all points against the flesh and the devil, he takes refuge in self-delusion and mental imposture—learns to play at fast and loose with his own conscience, and to baffle the vigilance of the public by dexterous equivocations; sails as near the wind as he can—shuffles with principle—is punctilious in matters of form, and tries to reconcile the greatest strictness of decorum and regularity of demeanour with the least possible sacrifice of his own interest or appetites. They (the priests) indulge in all the sensuality that is not prohibited in the

decadence; they monopolize every convenience they can lay lawful hands on, and consider themselves as the peculiar favourites of heaven, and the rightful inheritors of the earth; they are on a short allowance of sin, and are only the more eager to catch all the stray bits and nice morsels they can meet."—*Hazlitt*.

Account of an Animal not described by Buffon or other Naturalists.

[This trifle, written by one of the contributors to this Work, was, without the knowledge of the author, inserted in one of the weekly newspapers.]

THE *non-descript* in question is a biped, or two-legged animal; its body black, sleeky, dew-lapped, and inclined to corpulency. This animal is confined to no age or climate, having been found at all times and in all quarters of the earth, though in some places in a more wild and savage state than in our own country. From remains which have been dug up in the field of history, there is good reason to believe that it was in former ages larger and more ferocious than our present breed; its skeleton, indeed, like that of the mammoth, is immense, and even terrific; and we know that there was a time when mankind were dreadfully tossed and gored by its fury. More peaceable, however, in its present habits, and become comparatively domesticated, it is now generally found in *fat* pastures, and in the parks and meadows of the Great; or, like the town bull, it frequently feeds upon the parish at large, consuming a whole *tenth* part of the produce and stock, both live and dead, of a district. Although retaining a smack of its original inclination for blood, this creature is generally extremely inactive in its habits, and extremely tractable to the commands of its master. Hired to *guard* the flock, it has been frequently found to *worry*, and always to *fleece* them. There are those amongst us sanguine enough to hope that the time may yet come when their numbers may not merely be reduced, but when, like the wolves which formerly infested our island, they may be wholly destroyed; and, with the kind permission of heaven, the race become entirely extinct.

THE FREETHINKING CHRISTIANS' REVIEW OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

"But all their works they do for to be seen of men."—*Jesus*.

THE sentiment expressed in the motto conveys the opinion entertained by Jesus concerning a Jewish sect, whose numbers and influence appear to have been greater than those of any cotemporary party. Their religious profession was of the strictest kind, and the very name by which they were called indicated their dissatisfaction with, and dissent from, the lax and formal profession of their Jewish brethren;—the term *Pharisee* being derived from a Hebrew

word expressive of *separation*. The Pharisees then were the *separatists*—the *dissenters* of their day; the *saints*, in fact, of the Jewish age; so full of zeal—so overflowing with godliness—so abundant in good works, as to hawk about their devotional exercises in the streets and the market place, and to proclaim their alms-giving with the trumpet's mouth. "*But all their works they do for to be seen of men.*" This is a very severe and sweeping censure—a broad and general condemnation of a whole denomination of religious professors. The wonder is, that, in these days of false candour and time-serving sycophancy, the book should be esteemed canonical, in which such a sentiment is contained. This sentiment, however, evincing, as it does, the superior mind and honest purpose of him who uttered it, will serve us as a clue to guide our inquiries in this and a future Article, and to elucidate the facts and observations which it is our intention to lay before the reader.

We have already, in a former article, in some measure, opened our view of the important, the active, and wide-spreading exertions which are now making by the several sects in our own country, in behalf of religion; and, without denying the benefits which eventually, and in the course of providence, may result from such exertions, it will be our chief object, aided by the precepts and principles of Christianity, to mark the spirit in which they are conducted, and to examine and explain the motives which move and govern the immediate agents in these proceedings.

THE DISSENTERS are the first to engage in every public religious object. In all the pious schemes and novelties of the day they take the lead—whilst the church party remain generally inactive, and indifferent spectators; or if they consent to make common cause with the dissenters, it is either because they have been shamed into exertion by their example, or because they dread their growing strength and overwhelming influence. To one, or to both these causes is to be attributed the support which, of late years, the church party have given to the education of the poor, and the distribution of the Bible, after having directed a fruitless opposition against both these objects when first they were originated. Many reasons of policy and of prudence may be assigned for that indifference, with regard to the dissemination of education and religion, with which the dissenters have been so constantly in the habit of *bruited* the church party. But allowing the full force of those reasons, which need not here be suggested, the truth after all is that THE CHURCHMAN

—the modern churchman—from the very nature of his profession—from the law of his being, if we may so speak, can never be removed from a state of indifference. We do not insist here upon the formality of the ritual of his church; her tedious ceremonies—her long prayers—her vain repetitions—her mechanical rotatory worship; for, even if it were possible for the mind to be roused into action beneath the leaden solemnities of our established religion, still what reason—what motive—can the churchman have for exertion or for energy? His religion is provided for him by the state—his salvation is secured by law—his future happiness is guaranteed by act of parliament—his creed is part and parcel of the law of the land—his profession opens the door to place, to profit, and to power—his “godliness, with content, is *great gain!*” It is in the nature of possession too—of long and secure possession—to beget indifference. The churchman, in this state of repletion, necessarily becomes indifferent and lethargic, and his system of faith confirms this disposition. Hence it is that the churchman pursues a sober and, abating the prime folly of his system, a sensible course; enthusiasm is banished from his church and alien to his habits; he seeks no change—he desires no improvement—he is contented with things as they are; and if ever he be animated in the cause of religion, to a degree of excitement beyond what the soul of an oyster may be supposed to feel, it is when the church is in danger from dissenters and schismatics; for he considers there is no morality where there are no mitres—no loyalty where there is no lawn; and that people are in a very dangerous way when they are exposed to the risk of being sent to heaven without “bishops, priests, and deacons!”

Turning to the dissenters, we observe them, it is true, agreeing with the establishment in many common errors of doctrine and of practice; but in their actual condition and political circumstances, how widely different are they from each other! With the dissenting priesthood every thing depends on *themselves*; tolerated only, but not supported by the laws, they have to rely on their own energy and address for favour with the people. Unlike the clergy of the church, whose revenues are secured by law, they depend upon public favour for a gratuitous support; hence the necessity of suiting their system, the forms of their worship, and the spirit of their teaching, to the taste of the times; hence the excitement which they are continually offering to public

feeling; hence the baits and the snares by which they are enabled to catch men; hence the attractions, the novelties, the new patterns, by which they draw attention to their establishments; hence, Absalom like, they stand at our gates, under the specious pretext of supplying the neglect of established authority, but in reality to "*steal the hearts of the men of Israel.*" Consistent with this object is the cant which is now set up by the dissenters—and all sects out of power—in favour of candour and moderation; of a spirit of union and mutual forbearance. That they have much need of forbearance towards each other we willingly allow; but there is abroad in the world a species of candour and liberality, which it is difficult to reconcile with an honest love of truth. This candour Mr. Rowland Hill avowed at a late provincial missionary meeting, when he boasted that "*he was a Calvinist in the morning, an Arminian in the afternoon, and a Churchman in the evening.*" This candour the catholic Duke of Buckingham evinced when, on a recent occasion, he graced, by his presence, the solemnity of laying the foundation-stone of a *protestant* church.

To men who trade in religion, and priests of all denominations *do* trade in religion, the wealth of the established church—the princely revenues of her dignitaries—the quiet, secure, and legal possessions of her beneficed clergy—may be supposed to be not wholly free from attraction. It is not without reason, therefore, that several sects of dissenters evince a leaning to the church; adopt her ritual, and use her liturgy. This adherence to the church, on the part of dissenters, is particularly illustrated in the instance of the most numerous body of dissenters—the Wesleyan Methodists; the doctors of which sect have, at the time we are writing, just issued forth, to the connexion, a sort of official notice for the correct observance of the approaching *popish* fast, called "Good Friday," which they say "we judge to be highly expedient and useful; and in retaining it among us as a body, we not only act on our own experience of what we have found to be advantageous to the interests of truth and piety, but in conformity also to the *judgment and practice of the church of England.*"* Upon a similar principle, perhaps, it is that the enlightened, the philosophic Mr. Belsham, the Unitarian teacher at Essex-street chapel, discovers many advantages in an established religion. Nor

* Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, for March 1823, page 100.

are the objects of the Calvinists, in forcing their preachers into the church and appropriating her creeds and confessions to their own particular views, wholly inexplicable. We are pleased to see that some individuals in the church are not altogether insensible to the danger which threatens them from the zeal, the perseverance, and the unceasing manœuvres of the dissenters. One of our London clergymen, we observe, on a late occasion, had the spirit to refuse to suffer his pulpit to be occupied by the evangelical practitioner of the Surrey chapel; and, what is of more importance, Dr. Herbert Marsh, Bishop of Peterborough, has recently thrown up a rampart round the church, mounted with *eighty-seven* pieces of cannon, in the shape of so many questions, which are brought to bear upon the faith of all the candidates for holy orders in his diocese. This is as it should be. The bishop, it has been said, is convinced of the bad practical effects of high calvinistic doctrines upon the common people; at any rate, he may discover in his own breast, good and sufficient reason why those who favour this persuasion should seek preferment in the church. The interrogatories of Bishop Marsh, and the disputes that have grown out of them, appear to us of so much importance, as exhibiting the *state of parties*, that we are induced, somewhat in departure from the expressed object of this article, to direct particular attention thereto. The worthy bishop, as the reader will not fail to have noticed, has, for his very prudent and proper conduct in this business, been accused, both in parliament and by the public press, of a wish to interfere with the rights of conscience. But what right, we would ask, can a clergyman of the established religion have to a *conscience*? He is sworn to teach, not what his conscience dictates, but what the law commands; not what is true, but what is legal. His religion is set forth in the statute book: his creed, and the articles of his church, form, in fact, part of an act of parliament! We are aware that the Burnets, the Sherlocks, the Horsleys, the Fullers, and a host of church authorities, may be cited to prove that our national creed was left designedly loose and vague upon many points of opinion, in order, at a time when the reformed religion was but newly established, to insure the concurrence of as many classes of dissenters as possible; and when, to strengthen her hands against the adherents of the Romish faith, the church found it her policy to conciliate schismatics, and make unto herself "*friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.*"

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That such was, certainly, the object with those who compiled the national creed, may be collected from the proceedings of the several convocations which have been held in reference thereto, from the days of Henry VIII. downwards. In the year 1536, certain articles of faith were agreed on, by the convocation appointed for that purpose by Henry; these articles were published by the king's printer, in a book, entitled "*Articles devised by the kynges highness majestie, to stablyshe Christen quietnes, and unitie amonge us, and to auoyde contentious opinions; which articles be also approued by the consent and determination of the hole clergie of this realme.*" In the preface to these articles, written by the king himself, the object is expressed to be "that unitie and concord in opinions—namely, in such things as do concern our religion merely, without any let or hindrance, be of our subjects truly believed—may increase and go forward, and all occasion of dissent and discord, touching the same, be repressed and utterly extinguished." His majesty further states, that he is induced to this work from "being very desirous to eschew, not only the dangers of souls, but also the outward unquietness, which, by occasion of the said diversity in opinions, (if remedy were not provided) might, perchance, have enseeded." This convocation, in the following year, it appears, appointed a committee to compose a book, which was entitled "*The Godly and Pious Institution of a Christen Man.*" These two works appear to have been the foundation of the creed of the reformed church, as contained in the present Book of Common Prayer; and the several alterations and corrections that, from time to time, have taken place in the authorized forms and confessions of the church, will be found, by reference to the existing state of parties, to have been dictated by a desire to conciliate the non-conformists and catholics, upon various points of difference, in regard to doctrine, to discipline, and ceremonies. In 1540 the authorized form of religion appears to have sustained the first alteration; and, at the opening of the session of parliament, Lord Cromwell informed the two houses "that the king, in order to terminate all disputes about religion, had appointed commissioners to examine the contested articles, that a standard of faith might be established upon the word of God alone." (*Smollett*, vol. 6, p. 69.) The result of the labours of these commissioners was published, being entitled "*A Necessary Doctrine and Eru-dition for any Christen Man;*" and it comes with this

recommendation in the preface: "*the Lords, bothe spirituall and temporall, with the nether house of parliament, having both sene and lyked it very well*.*." In this work, says Wheatly, (a church writer of authority) "the king's supremacy in ecclesiastical matters was *explained*, so as to prevent offence being taken at his title of *head*;" and the following admirable definition, which it exhibits of the catholic church, evinces the desire that existed to promote the union of parties. The catholic church is defined to be an aggregate body, "comprehending all assemblies of men over the whole world, that received the faith of Christ—who ought to hold an unity of love and brotherly agreement together, by which they become members of the catholic church."—*The History of Religion*, vol. 3, p. 29.

In 1548 the whole of the liturgy underwent another important revision. Speaking of the object of this revision, the author of "*The History of Religion*" states "It was likewise intended that the new liturgy should remove all dissensions, and bring the people to an *uniformity in their religious opinions*, as well as in divine worship." Vol. 3, p. 91. And again, p. 93, "It seems to have been their chief view to make the worship of the church of England such as all Christians upon earth might lawfully join in, whilst it afforded all the necessary means of salvation to her own members." Now, although the lords spiritual and temporal, with the nether house of parliament, had seen the former book of the established faith, and had "*lyked it very well*;" and although the present one was confirmed by the king and the other estates in parliament, who gave it this encomium—"which, at this time, by the AID OF THE HOLY GHOST, with uniform agreement, is of them concluded, set forth, &c.;" yet, notwithstanding such high approbation, and important aid, was it found necessary, in the year 1551, and again during the reign of Elizabeth, to make further alterations and corrections therein. Those made in 1551 are candidly admitted, by the act of parliament which confirmed them, to have proceeded from "*curiosity, rather than any worthy cause*!" Those made in the reign of Elizabeth were of a more serious nature; they omitted the deprecation against the pope, viz. "*from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities*," contained in the former book of Edward the VI.; as also the rubric that was added at the end of

* Wheatly on the Common Prayer, p. 24. Oxford ed. 1819.

the communion office, against the *real presence* in the eucharist, the object of which is explained by Wheatly, p. 28, "For it being the queen's design to unite the nation *"in one faith,* it was, therefore, recommended to the divines *"to see that there should be no definition made against the aforesaid notion; but that it should remain as a speculative definition, not determined, in which every one was left to the freedom of his own mind."*

To what extent this policy was carried by Elizabeth may be inferred from the fact of her having altered the doctrine of the reformed church, with reference to the *real presence* in the sacrament; actually adopting, with the view of conciliating her catholic subjects, the popish system in this particular.

The second book of Edward VI. had expressly repudiated the notion of the *real presence*; and, on the celebration of the communion, had added a protestation concerning kneeling at the sacrament of the Lord's supper, in order to disclaim any adoration, as is therein expressed, *"either unto the sacramental bread and wine there bodily received; or unto any real and essential presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood."* But upon Elizabeth's accession this rational sentiment was laid aside, and, in the homilies published by her authority, it is expressly declared concerning the *real presence*—"thus much we must be sure to hold, that in the supper of the Lord there is no vain ceremony, *no bare sign, no untrue figure of a thing absent:* but as the scripture saith, the table of the Lord, the bread and cup of the Lord, the memory of Christ, the annunciation of his death—yea, *the communion of the body and blood of the Lord,* is a MARVELLOUS INCORPORATION, which, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, (the very bond of our conjunction with Christ) is through faith wrought in the souls of the faithful."* And in this same homily it is described "that the meat we seek for in this supper is spiritual food, the nourishment of our soul, *a heavenly rectification and not earthly—an invisible meat and not bodily—a ghostly substance and not carnal.*" Whilst in the church catechism it is expressly asserted that "the body and blood of Christ *are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper.*" The popish doctrine of the *real presence* which had formerly been con-

* Homily concerning the Sacrament.—Church Homilies.—Oxford ed.

demned, became then, and continues now, the doctrine of the reformed church of England. Many curious facts illustrative of the policy of Elizabeth, in bending the established religion to the taste and scruples of rival parties, might be collected; the following is peculiarly to this purpose. In the first book of Edward, in the form of words prescribed for the delivery of the elements at the Lord's supper, these words are to be found: "*The Body,*" or "*the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;*" these being thought too much to favour the *real presence*, were, in Edward's second book, omitted; and in their place were substituted the plain words, "*Take and eat this, &c.*" "*Drink this, &c.*" It was soon, however, found by many that this was calculated to leave too little mystery in the sacrament; reducing it to a mere eating and drinking, in remembrance of the death of Jesus, so that in a short time it became as much disliked as the former; when, upon Elizabeth's accession, *both* these forms were enjoined to be used, which Wheatly very candidly confesses was—"to please both parties!"*

In the year 1661, the Book of Common Prayer was brought, by a commission, into its present form; and in the preface to this work, as it now stands, we have it declared, on authority, that "great importunities were used to his sacred majesty, that the said book might be revised, and such alterations therein, and additions thereunto made, as should be thought requisite for *the ease of tender consciences*; whereunto his majesty, out of his pious inclination to give satisfaction (so far as could be reasonably expected) to all his subjects, OF WHAT PERSUASION SOEVER, did graciously condescend."

The thirty-nine articles, so much the subject of dispute, appear to have originated in the six articles first published by Henry VIII.; they were extended to forty-two, by the ecclesiastical commission under Cranmer, in 1552; and reduced to thirty-nine and confirmed by royal authority in 1562. At the period of the holding the convocation of 1562, the doctrines of Calvin, concerning the divine decrees, had been rendered peculiarly popular by the learning and zeal of the doctors of the academy of Geneva; and these particular doctrines were adopted by most of the reformed churches of Europe. The English refugees, also,

* Wheatly on the Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper.

at this time, returned to their own country, strongly tinctured, no doubt, with the doctrines of Calvin; and several foreign princes interceded with the queen (Elizabeth) in behalf of these dissenters, that they might be indulged with the liberty of a separate worship, which, it seems, the queen would never grant, although they enjoyed a degree of toleration from her connivance. These circumstances will sufficiently explain the *calvinistic* bearing of the thirty-nine articles, although, their object being, as their title declares, to establish "consent touching true religion," it was deemed advisable to express the tenets of calvinism in guarded and mitigated terms.*

In 1571 these articles were reviewed in a convocation that met at the Chapter House of St. Paul's. The business was opened by a sermon, preached by Dr. Whitgift, from the text "*The apostles and elders came together to consult of this matter.*" Unlike the apostles and elders in the case referred to however, it would seem the convocation *did nothing*, as we can find no trace of any alteration made in the articles at this time. Calvinism, which, up to this period, had prevailed with great success, was destined to experience a considerable revulsion; for, soon after the famous Synod of Dort, arminianism became in fashion at court, under the auspices of Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had written a book to prove the arminian doctrines to be the only true orthodoxy of the church. The debates appear to have run high between the calvinistic and arminian doctors, to quiet which the king, in the year 1662, issued a proclamation, "the literal tenor of which" (says Dr. Maclaine, in his notes on Mosheim, vol. 5, p. 394) "was, 'in truth, more favourable to the Calvinists than to the Arminians; though, by the manner in which it was interpreted and executed by LAUD, it was turned to the advantage of the latter.'" Instead of reforming the thirty-nine articles, Laud persuaded the king to have these articles reprinted with an "*ambiguous declaration*" prefixed to them, which might tend to silence the controversies between the Calvinists and Arminians. "This *declaration*" (says the able commentator just quoted) "which, in most editions of 'the Common Prayer, is still to be found at the head of the articles, is a most curious piece of *political theology*; and 'had it not borne hard upon the right of private judgment,

* See Mosheim, Smollett, &c.

“and been evidently designed to favour one party, though it carried the *aspect of a perfect neutrality*, it might have been looked upon as a wise and provident measure to secure the tranquility of the church: for, in the tenor of this *declaration*, precision was sacrificed to prudence, and ambiguity—nay, even contradictions were preferred before consistent, clear, and positive decisions, *that might have fomented dissensions and discord.*”

It is a curious fact that shortly after this period, when Laud was in the meridian of his power, and when, on the arrival of Frederick, the Prince Elector of Palatine, in England, the prayer for the royal family was altered—with the view of omitting, for political reasons, the names of Frederick and Lady Elizabeth his wife, and their princely issue—the occasion was seized on, in order to retract an expression supposed to savour too strongly of *calvinistic election*; for the following words, with which the prayer originally commenced, were omitted: “*Almighty God which hast promised to be a father of THINE ELECT, and of their seed.*”

What a scene of political management, and of religious statecraft, does this historical sketch of our church creed exhibit to our view! How truly does it prove “*church of Englandism*” to be a religion of this world; and how forcibly does it illustrate the truth of the well-known observation of the Earl of Chatham: “We have a popish liturgy, calvinistic articles, and an arminian clergy.” Whilst what Robinson, of Cambridge, has so happily observed, upon a view of one of the periods we have been noticing, strictly applies to the whole, “Statesmen sacrificed religion, to save the nation—prelates were chosen for secular purposes—and all persons, and events, were directed to *crown uses.*”

One authority, and we might quote many to the purpose, will be sufficient to justify the view we have exhibited of the church policy. “The church of England” (says Dr. Sherlock) “has left a *latitude of sense*, to prevent schisms and breaches upon every different opinion. It is evident the church of England has so done in some articles which are most liable to the hottest disputes; which yet are penned with that temper as to be willingly subscribed by men of *different apprehensions* in those matters.”—*Defence of Stillingfleet’s Unreasonableness of Separation.*

From what we have advanced upon this subject it may be inferred that the conduct of Bishop Marsh is wholly inconsistent with the *former policy* of the church, and we are clearly of opinion that it is so; for the very essence of

that policy was to *admit*, rather than to *exclude*. But new circumstances may dictate to our hierarchy a new course of policy; and though driven to the shift of acting in the very teeth of the former policy of the church, the bishop appears to us to be pursuing a prudent part, in availing himself of every lawful means to prevent the church from being successfully besieged by the dissenters, whose sappers and miners have already made entry into her outworks. The bishop understands full well the blessings of an established religion; and, however contrary to all former precedent, and to the spirit in which the national creed was planned, he appears determined to "keep that *good thing* which is "committed to his charge." He is invested by law with the authority of examining the qualifications of all who aspire to participate in these advantages in his diocese; and the strictness and ingenuity with which his lordship has performed this part of his duty is beyond all praise. The sagacity of the bishop is evinced, not only in the number and nature of the questions proposed, but in the *shortness* of the answers to which he restricts the applicants. A Mr. Thurtell, who applied for holy orders, replied to the bishop's eighty-seven questions, in ten pages of lengthy reasoning, and was very properly rejected. The bishop does not want *reasoning*;—*aye* or *no* is all that can be permitted from one who aspires to teach a religion *as by law established*: it is not a reasoner that is required, but an automaton—a machine—

"A piece of mere church furniture at best."

The bishop has recourse, it appears, to a *printed form*, and his eighty-seven questions are so nicely constructed as to admit only of *two* answers; the one admitting, the other excluding the candidate. Spaces are left against each of the questions in the printed form, to which limit the answers must be confined; and thus the most abstruse and complicated points of theology and metaphysics are dispatched with admirable brevity. In order to leave no room for quibbling, shuffling, or floundering on these points, the bishop, it appears, "assigns two inches of space only for the "answer on original sin; an inch and a half to justification; "three quarters to predestination; and half an inch to free-will!"* This is a sufficient proof how seriously resolved

* See the Edinburgh Review, Nov. 1822.

this prelate is to guard the church from all encroachment. We heartily congratulate him on his undertaking. Those who wish to pluck the golden fruit of the church may complain, but the right of his lordship to propose these, or any other interrogatories, cannot be questioned, and we hope to see all the twenty-four bishops act upon the same principle; and if each of these pious and learned personages content themselves with only *eighty-seven* questions, which, of course, they may vary as they please, this will give to the church a protection of upwards of *two thousand* questions, which, like "*a flaming sword*," may be made to "*TURN EVERY WAY, to keep the way of the tree of life!*"

The northern journal just referred to, attempts to throw this plan into ridicule, by suggesting that the differences of opinion among the bishops themselves may occasion great inconvenience to the candidates for holy orders. "By this new system of interrogation" (says the Reviewer) "a man may be admitted into orders at Barnet; rejected at Stevenage; re-admitted at Brogden; kicked out as Calvinist at Witham Common, and hailed as an ardent Arminian on his arrival at York." Again, Mr. Greenough, say the same Reviewers, has made a map of England, according to its geological varieties: blue for the chalk, green for the clay, red for the sand, and so forth. Under this system of Bishop Marsh we must petition for the assistance of the geologist, in the fabrication of an ecclesiastical map. All the Arminian districts must be purple. Green for one theological extremity, sky-blue for another, as many colours as there are bishops; as many shades of these colours as there are archdeacons—a tailor's pattern card, the picture of vanity, fashion, and caprice!" Now these northern critics, supporters too of the establishment, must suppose ORTHODOXY to be a pretty cheat indeed, if they imagine that even the bishops can not agree among themselves, as to what this orthodoxy consists of. Here is a parliamentary religion, which the prelates are sworn to maintain; and yet it seems, according to the shewing of its advocates, no two of them can agree together, as to its dogmas and creeds. Here are men, the spiritual guides of the nation—the pillars of the church—appointed by the king—"moved by the Holy Ghost"—"desiring to be teachers of the law—understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Our readers will hold us guiltless of any affection for the bishops, but we have never put forth any thing against the sacred bench half so

cutting as is this insinuation! But, as touching the inconvenience of the questions of Bishop Marsh to the candidates for orders, *conscientious* persons only can have a difficulty in answering such questions satisfactorily; the number of *such* persons, candidates for *holy orders* in the church, may be supposed not to be very large. We have it on the authority of Bishop Marsh in the house of lords, that *two individuals* only in his diocese had been rejected by means of his eighty-seven interrogatories. Now these, and such like individuals, have a remedy at hand; instead of raising a cry against the good bishop for adopting a measure necessary to the security of the establishment, they will do better to seek consolation in the advice of an apostle—*“study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that ye may walk HONESTLY towards them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.”* (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12.)

That we are not at all mistaken in the worldly, secular motives and principles by which we have represented both the church party and the dissenting interest to be actuated, will be corroborated by a very candid admission made by a respectable critical journal, the organ of the high church party. The last number of the Quarterly Review, in a critique on the Bampton Lectures, delivered before the University of Oxford, 1822, in correcting the too liberal mode of treating the dissenters, which the lecturer had incautiously recommended, holds this language:—

“It is seldom that we disagree with Mr. Whately, but in this passage he goes rather farther than we are disposed to follow him. Certainly we would not treat dissenters with any degree of harshness, or abridge their civil rights; but there are *many instances* in which we think it by no means inexpedient *quietly to seek to influence them by SECULAR MOTIVES—to appeal, in short, to their SELF INTEREST.* We would not do any dissenter the least wrong; we would treat him with all courtesy, and would not withhold from him the assistance which his necessities may demand. But in the conferring of *many benefits and advantages* which are purely optional, we think that we not only may, but that we ought, to show a decided preference to members of our own communion. We apprehend that *self interest and secular motives* of various descriptions—a preference in commercial intercourse especially—are made great use of by many of the dissenters, for the purpose of keeping up *their numbers.* Perhaps it would not be illiberal to express our opinion that *a very large portion of them are what they are from the operation of such motives alone.*”

It will be perceived that, as far as the church is concerned, we have considered the controversy between Bishop Marsh and his opponents as one of *interest* merely; a question of pounds, shillings, and pence, and of importance

to the clergy alone, as it can be of no consequence to the *laity*, to whom they pay the imposts for the support of the established religion; and hence, in such disputes between the clergy and their opponents, church people feel little interest. This truth is, at once, happily expressed, and honestly admitted by the Bampton lecturer himself, a gentleman of excellent talent and acute observation, as his admirable defence of Christianity—"Historic Doubts concerning Napoleon Bonaparte," must attest. This gentleman then, in his recent discourses before the Oxford University, confesses to that learned body that

"*Laymen* are too apt to consider themselves as little more than bystanders in the dispute between the church and her opponents; they give her the preference, indeed, but rather as a matter of taste than of conscience; or at least, rather as umpires between two contending parties, than as making the cause *their own*. And many a one may be found who would allow, and even expect, in the *clergy*, some zeal in that cause, yet would seem to regard it as altogether *their concern*—not as one in which he himself has a common interest."*

We have been tempted into this long analysis of the controversy between Bishop Marsh and his opponents, in order to exhibit our views of the comparative situation and merits of the church party and the dissenters. As Christians we are enemies to every state religion that passes under the name of Christian;—but we are open, honest, avowed enemies; and we detest an hostility which is conducted under the mask of friendship, or which is instigated by any sinister motive. Our opposition to the church is one of religious principle and of duty—not of personal feeling. We regard the great body of churchmen to be quite as estimable in character as any other party; and we would not exchange the clergy of the church for the priests of any class of dissenters with which we are acquainted. It is not a change of *men*; it is not a modification of *some* principles; it is not a correction of *some* abuses; it is not a rejection of *some* dogmas that will satisfy the interests of truth, if it shall appear that the system is vicious throughout—and that, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no sound part about it! The truth is that every sect and party, in which *priestcraft* is tolerated, possesses the elements of all the evil with which the church itself is afflicted; the evil is only heightened in the latter because

* The Use and Abuse of Party Feeling in Matters of Religion Considered; in Eight Sermons, preached before the University of Oxford, 1822.

it is established by law. Turning, however, our attention from the church party, let us pursue the conduct, and track the course, of the dissenters, singly and alone.

We have observed that the activity and public exertions of the dissenters, in support of religious and philanthropic objects, emanate naturally from their condition, in the state, as competitors of a powerful body—a religious corporation, nourished and maintained by the laws; and of their public exertions generally, especially those of the more popular classes, the evangelical party—the *saints*—we have said, “*All their works they do for to be seen of men.*”

Hence, then, it is, that in all the public undertakings of the dissenters, an attempt has been made to fasten upon such objects as were likely, in a powerful degree, to awaken the sympathies, and engage the attention of the nation. It is impossible not to be struck with their powerful and successful efforts, in the abolition of the African slave trade; the distribution of the scriptures, at home and abroad; and the establishment of schools, for the education of the poor: each of which important objects they have the honour of having originated and commenced,

“ Though Christchurch long staid prudishly away.”

And, whilst we rejoice in the effects which these efforts have produced, and still more, in what they are calculated to produce; yet, the fact can neither be denied nor disguised, that each of these undertakings was eminently calculated to answer the objects of the dissenters—to increase their weight in the state, and their popularity with the people. They brought them before the public as the advocates of humanity, of liberty, and of knowledge; they became a constant theme, on which to appeal to the feelings of the nation; they favoured a perpetual display of the graces and charities of those who had put their hands to these works. The public, unaccustomed to look below the surface of things, and ever disposed to judge favourably, where humanity and good intent are assumed, saw no inconsistency in the sensitive and feeling advocates of *African* liberty, being careless and callous to the cause of *British* liberty. They saw no inconsistency in the great leader of those glorious struggles against *foreign* slavery, being, at the same time, the servile follower of a minister who lived, and who fell, in the inglorious task of forging chains for his country. How eloquently did this pious senator plead the

wrongs of Africa's oppressed and sooty tribe! How touching his appeals in behalf of the black! With what propriety might the Englishman, beggared and oppressed by the measures, of which this man was the constant supporter—deprived of the constitutional protection of the laws—torn from his home—manacled and imprisoned without trial, and without offence—with what propriety might the Englishman have asked—“*Am I not a brother and a friend?*” But so it was. In spite of this inconsistency, in spite of this unnatural union of such anomalous qualities in the same person, this political evangelist became the very genius of philanthropy, and the idol of his party!!

The operations of the Bible Societies, School Societies, Missionary Societies, Tract Societies, and all the numerous Societies, for religious purposes, occasion, as may be supposed, an immense expenditure of money; and thus many powerful interests are attached to the cause, and many opportunities occur of “*quietly influencing men by secular motives,*” as might be best attested by the experience and evidence of a host of godly builders, pious printers, and spiritual scribes. The objects of these institutions are promoted by means of public meetings, called at the public taverns; and from the composition of these meetings, and the persons of weight and influence that are frequently brought together on such occasions, one might imagine that the time had literally arrived when “*the SAINTS shall judge the earth.*” Merchants and bankers; senators and soldiers; peers of the realm and princes of the blood; ministers of state and members of foreign legations; are found assembled together, in honour of a religion first taught by the fishermen of Gallilee.

At a recent meeting of the “Port of London Society,” for the conversion of sailors, two noble lords, the Earl of Rocksavage and Lord Calthorpe, were among the distinguished supporters of this quixotic scheme; which was described by their worthy coadjutor, Rowland Hill, as an effort to give the sailors “*the poor dear things,*” (as he called them) “the blessings of the gospel, and to make them obedient to King George, by becoming obedient to King Jesus.” And second to no one on this occasion, we observed a city alderman and baronet, who, if report speaks truly, boasts that he always carries a *Bible* in his pocket, in which he would seem to take as much pride as, during his mayoralty, he was wont to do, in his *spanish hat* and *white charger!*

At a Bible Society meeting, held two or three years since in the city, a high city officer, who is *known to be a disbeliever in the Bible*, obtained, as we observed in the public prints, considerable applause, from his pious appeal in behalf of "the blessed word of God;" whilst an Irish barrister, whose eloquence equally immortalizes every subject which it touches, from the truths of the Bible to the wrongs of "the widow Blake," electrified the audience, by invoking, in behalf of the scriptures, the manes of Bacon and of Franklin;—of Bacon, who, contrary to God's word, *wrested judgment for bribes*; and Franklin, the associate of Paine in the cause of infidelity! Such inconsistencies, however, are never taxed, when used in the cause of the *saints*; and the most ordinary occurrences, and unimportant coincidences, are seized upon as marking the finger of God, in behalf of their objects. Thus it was lately mentioned, at a public religious meeting, that the present possessor of the *estate* purchased by Gibbon, in Switzerland, from the profits of his writings against religion, expends a large sum *annually*, in promulgating that gospel which his predecessor *sought* to undermine. That the printing-press, at Ferney, which Voltaire employed to print his blasphemies, was now employed, at Geneva, in printing the holy scriptures; and that the room in which David Hume died, at Edinburgh, was used for the first provincial meeting of an Auxiliary Bible Society!

It would be improper, in this place, to pass over the services of the other sex, in behalf of the evangelical cause. The ladies, we observe, constitute, at least, three-fourths of the meetings such as we have been describing. Busy, bustling, bountiful ladies, full of pride and piety, with much leisure and little diffidence, so regular a set, and so much of a class, as to have the appearance of being supplied, by contract, to the meeting. The speakers are too polite to overlook this *interesting* portion of the auditory; and, after much flattery, they are sent away with an injunction to urge the objects of the meeting upon their husbands and friends.

It is not among the least evils of this system of religious affectation and display, the change that it is producing in the *female character*:—gentle, modest, and retiring; unsuited to public business; shrinking from the touch of impurity; casting upon her lord the burthen of commerce with the world; we seek for the woman in the retirement of private life—in that sacred, domestic circle of which she is the solace and the joy; that happy hearth of which she is the

constant ornament, and around which she dispenses a nameless, tranquil delight! Coincident with this sketch of the female character is the apostolic exhortation: "*Teach, the young women to be sober—to love their husbands—to love their children—to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands.*" But how these qualities are to be preserved, and these duties performed, we have a difficulty in conceiving, when our religious females are brought into immediate contact with the most low and disgusting scenes of vice; when their time is occupied with complicated plans of public reformation; their attention withdrawn from their families, and devoted to the improvement of the discipline, or the reform of the morals, of a prison; and their days spent in the successive engagements of public religious meetings. At the head of this holy sisterhood stands the celebrated Mrs. FRY; and, though one of the sect of Quakers, a sect who affect to disregard the praise of this world; and to do their good deeds in private, yet it does so happen that the benevolent efforts, and unceasing labours of this good lady, for the public cause, are noised abroad in the world, and even the senate resounds with her praises.

The following language, in reference to Mrs. Fry, and her female committee, was used by Sir James Macintosh, in his speech on the criminal code, during the last session of parliament:—

"We have all heard a great deal of the benevolence of a community of females in certain catholic countries, called by the affecting name of '*Sisters of Charity.*' It is their task to visit hospitals, to attend the sick, and to perform other offices of a charitable and benevolent nature. But those catholic Sisters of Charity are bound by certain vows; they are under the controul of peculiar religious obligations; they have previously relinquished all the duties of social life. Our protestant Sisters of Charity are bound by no vows; they are not under the controul of any peculiar religious obligations; and, in discharging the various duties of social life, they afford examples of all the domestic virtues, and yet they go a step further than their illustrious catholic models. Not content with visiting hospitals—not content with administering to bodily disease and infirmity—we behold the purest and most virtuous of their sex voluntarily engaged in the daily contemplation of depravity and wickedness, in their most hideous form—that of a profligate and abandoned woman. - - - - When engaged in their benevolent occupation I have visited them in company with females of distinguished ability, of keen observation, and of a strong sense of the ridiculous. By those females all their actions have been closely watched and remarked; and the result has been that, although prepared to witness benevolence and humanity, they have been utterly astonished at the calm good sense—at the repugnance to any exaggeration—at the steady prudence and caution invariably manifested. Never could my friends sufficiently express their admiration at seeing those who were engaged in a work that might naturally tempt display, conduct themselves with a modesty that at once evinced an

unwillingness to receive even the reward of approbation. The energetic benevolence of their character was easily excited by the exhibition of distress, but their equanimity was incapable of being disturbed by vanity. Sir! it was impossible to quit such a scene without a strong feeling of self-congratulation, at the consciousness of belonging to the same species as the inestimable individuals engaged in it."

Sir James is a very eloquent man, and peculiarly happy at a compliment. The learned gentleman, however, does suffer it to escape that these pious Quaker ladies are engaged in "a work that might *naturally* tempt display;" and he seems not to have been without his suspicions, from the circumstance of his having taken with him, to the Newgate school of morality, ladies "*with a strong sense of the 'ridiculous.'*" All this, however, is to be regarded as the art of the orator, who, aware of the weak parts of his case, candidly thrusts them forward, in order to disarm criticism, and introduces himself rather as an unwilling witness than an avowed advocate in such a cause.

We do confess, notwithstanding the judgment of this distinguished orator, that we do not understand that delicacy of mind which can induce this good lady to keep such bad company; and, whilst she may insure the admiration of Sir James, whilst performing her gratuitous occupations in favour of thieves and prostitutes, to our taste she would appear, at least, equally interesting whilst engaged in her incumbent duties to her husband and family; for Mrs. Fry, we understand, has a family of *nine children*, most of them young;—she has also a husband; although no one seems to suspect that there exists in the world such a person as *Mister Fry*. For ourselves, indeed, we have yet to learn how the multifarious public engagements of this female Howard, as she has been called, can, by possibility, be reconciled with the anxious and unceasing duties required from the mother of a numerous family! And here it may be remarked, as to the "Catholic Sisters of Charity," to whom our female philanthropists have been likened, in the above quotation, they were *unmarried* women; and, consequently, were relieved from the discharge of the domestic duties.

The Quakers, as a body, have been accustomed to exhibit an indifference to the opinions and praises of the world; if this was not mere affectation they have, certainly, of late, broken through the modesty of their former habit. This, however, is explained by Mr. Brougham, another of the panegyrists of this sect; who, with unaffected simplicity, appears to consider the publicity that has been given to their good works, as distressing to the meekness of their nature. At a late meeting of the "African Institution,"

speaking of the efforts of the Quakers in the abolition of the slave trade, the point was put in this way by the learned gentleman:—

“Too much could not be said of the labours of the society of Friends; who had been *forcibly compelled*, by the greatness of their own doings, to encroach upon that meekness of habit which uniformly induced them to

‘Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame,’

and *forced them to receive* that public approbation from their fellow subjects, which they were the first to earn, but the last to claim.”

The truth, after all, is, that “*all their works they do to be seen of men.*” They are pharisees “*after the strictest manner of the sect.*” A close observation of the spirit and character of this particular class of dissenters, convinces us that their humility is affectation; their plainness pride; their religion hypocrisy; and that what an American writer has recorded, as his opinions of the Quakers of America, is equally true of those in the old country, “that whilst they affect a total disregard to the mammon of this world, they pursue it with a step as steady as time, and an appetite as keen as death!”

In a future number we shall lay before the reader a more particular detail of some of those scenes of extravagance and folly, by which the dissenting party are seeking to attract popularity, and extend the boundary of their spiritual dominion.

NAPOLÉON'S SENTIMENTS ON RELIGION.

THE third part of Las Casas' work, recently published, entitled “A Journal of the Private Life and Conversations of the Emperor Napoleon, at St. Helena,” presents us with the sentiments of this truly extraordinary individual, on the subject of religion. The character and the fortunes of the man have rendered every thing connected with his opinions interesting to all parties; whilst, upon *such* a subject, our readers might expect to find (and their expectations will not meet with disappointment) the views of a deep and original thinker.

“In the evening after dinner, the conversation turned upon religion. The emperor dwelt on the subject at length. The following is a faithful summary of his arguments: I give it as being quite characteristic upon a point which has probably often excited the curiosity of

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“ many. The emperor, after having spoken some time with warmth and animation, said ‘ Every thing proclaims the existence of a God—that cannot be questioned—but all our religions are evidently the work of men. Why are there so many? Why has ours not always existed? Why does it consider itself exclusively the right one? What becomes, in that case, of all the virtuous men who have gone before us? Why do these religions revile, oppose, exterminate one another? Why has this been the case ever and every where? Because men are ever men—because priests have ever and every where introduced fraud and falsehood.’ ”

“ Somebody having ventured to say to him that he might possibly, in the end, become devout; the emperor answered, with an air of conviction, that he feared not; and that it was with regret he said it, for it was, no doubt, a great source of consolation; but that his incredulity did not proceed from perverseness, or from licentiousness of mind, but from the strength of his reason. ‘ I am, assuredly,’ (he afterwards added) ‘ very far from being an Atheist; but I cannot believe all that I am taught, in spite of my reason, without being false, and a hypocrite. To explain,’ (he continues) ‘ where I come from, what I am, and whither I go, is above my comprehension; and yet all that is. I am like the watch that exists without possessing the consciousness of existence. However the sentiment of religion is so consolatory that it must be considered as a gift of heaven. What a resource would it not be for us here to possess it? What influence could men and events exercise over me if, bearing my misfortunes as if inflicted by God, I expected to be compensated by him with happiness hereafter? What would be my happiness if the bright prospect of futurity presented itself, to crown the last moments of my existence?’ After a pause he resumed, ‘ How is it possible that conviction can find its way to our hearts when we hear the absurd language, and witness the acts of iniquity of the greatest number of those whose business it is to preach to us. I am surrounded by priests, who repeat incessantly that their reign is not of this world, and yet they lay hands upon every thing they can get. The pope is the head of that religion from heaven, and he thinks only of this world. What did the present chief pontiff, who is undoubtedly a good and holy man, not offer to be allowed to return to Rome? The surrender of the government of the church—of the

“ ‘ institution of bishops—was not too high a price for him
 “ ‘ to give, to become once more a secular prince. Even
 “ ‘ now he is the friend of all the Protestants who grant
 “ ‘ him every thing, because they do not fear him. He is
 “ ‘ only the enemy of catholic Austria because her territory
 “ ‘ surrounds his own,’ &c.

“ The emperor ended the conversation by desiring my
 “ son to bring him the New Testament, and taking it from
 “ the beginning, he read as far as the conclusion of the
 “ speech of Jesus on the mountain. He expressed himself
 “ struck with the highest admiration at the purity, the
 “ sublimity, the beauty of the morality it contained; and
 “ we all experienced the same feeling.”

Mistaken, however, in some respects, as these views, by
 the force of circumstances, have inevitably been, we should
 not have presented them to our readers had we not con-
 sidered that, incidentally, they furnish an illustration of
 more than one important and essential principle connected
 with revelation. They tend to shew, in the first place, in a
 strong, because in a practical, point of view, the folly and
 the emptiness of the prevailing systems, which pass under
 the name of Christian; furnishing us, on the authority of an
 individual intimately acquainted with all the secret ma-
 chinery of church and state, with a lively picture of
 the worldly and the mercenary spirit by which priests and
 pontiffs have, invariably, been actuated; a spirit by no
 means confined to the Romish church, of which the late
 emperor more immediately speaks, but which has been
 equally exemplified by the protestant and dissenting bodies;
 wherever, in fact, the influence of the priest has been
 permitted to extend.

The second point to which we would call the attention of
 our readers, is that remarkable passage in which a forcible
 and pathetic allusion is made, to the total insufficiency of
 even the most enlightened principles of scepticism; and in
 which the value, and more—the *necessity*, of revelation
 seems admitted, as the only means of affording solace in
 affliction, of supporting man under the trials of adversity, and
 of teaching him resignation to the will and confidence in the
 protection of the Divine Being.

How lamentable is the circumstance, when man turns thus
 naturally for support and consolation to the aid of revelation,
 that the mind, if strong and rational, should be repelled and
 disgusted by a system of mystery and imposition; that the
 prayer for support should be answered by the voice of the

priest, instead of the revelation from God. Such systems may impose upon weak intellects, but the strong and thinking mind rejects them, as it were, instinctively; or, as Napoleon has expressed it, by the "strength of their reason." Such, we need scarcely explain, are not *our* views of revelation;—the Christianity of the New Testament being simple, practical, and rational: admirably fitted to teach man his duties—to excite him to excellence—and fitted to support him in the hour of trial, and console him amid the sorrows of adversity—a system, too, which the "strength of our reason," instead of rejecting, must admire and support, and which affords a striking instance of the benevolence of Deity in the communication of principles to his creature man—so adapted to his wants and his intellect, as cannot fail to produce, in the thinking mind, the most profound veneration for the great and bountiful Author of all things. Before we leave the subject, it is impossible not to be struck with the fact, that priestcraft, on the one hand, and the mysterious and corrupt systems of religion, falsely called Christian, on the other, are the potent and the adequate causes of the general spread of infidelity.

ON RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

CHRISTIANITY is a communication from God to man. Its diffusion has devolved on human agents: force or argument are the only means by which they can discharge this office. The first is incompatible with the benevolence of God, and can secure profession only: the latter is consistent with that benevolence, and can induce conviction. On moral subjects men will, because they must, differ. Their powers of comprehension, and combination, are various. The effects of a body of moral evidence will be as various in degree as the minds to which the facts and reasonings are submitted. These truths apply equally to revelation as to other subjects. God has not thought fit to make revelation universally known in the first instance; but to intrust it to human agency, and to the natural course of events, until the fullness of time shall come. We may, therefore, expect that objections will be raised against it: these should

be encouraged—not repressed; they are the links in the chain of events by which truth is developed; as the flint elicits, by collision, the spark which gives light to those around, so does the collision of error with truth produce intellectual light. Christianity was intended to depend on evidence, and to be confirmed by discussion, or its communication would have been universal; and those who object to inquiry impeach the wisdom of God, who has made its diffusion dependent upon moral evidence and human agency, thereby manifesting their want of confidence in revealed truth, by evincing their fear of the puny efforts of man, against the message of his Maker.

From the time of Celsus to the time of Paine, objectors have always existed; but has Christianity suffered by them? On the contrary, it has been thereby separated from its corruptions; its evidence more frequently and more distinctly produced, and its purity more clearly shewn.

Revelation was not intended to change the nature of things, or to work a miraculous influence on the human intellect; its object was to open and point to the paths of truth and duty, and to furnish motives to man to walk in them. It was given as a schoolmaster, to lead us on by powerful, but natural motives, to virtue and benevolence. It was embraced by those who had, for ages, sacrificed unto other Gods, and it became subsequently amalgamated with the imperfections of the religion it superseded; for, in the absence of an immediate divine influence, it was natural it should have been so. The disciples of heathenism changed their name, and professedly became the followers of Jesus; but this, though a most important step towards the change to be worked in the foundation of virtue, and the motives to action, was still but a beginning. It required the silent operation of time and experience to infuse the principles and the spirit of Christianity—love to God, and benevolence to his creatures—into the hearts of those who had so long followed after strange Gods; and who had been without any standard of moral excellence for their guidance.

We might dwell at length upon the causes which have checked the spirit of benevolence:—for the present it is sufficient to observe that the professors of Christianity, having obtained power, have forgotten the spirit of their Master, and have imitated the persecutions with which *they* were, at first, opposed by their heathen adversaries. In combating their opponents they have imbibed their spirit;

and it remains for reason and Christianity to subdue the hearts of men to the impulses of mercy and benevolence.

We have said that objections should be answered, not suppressed; and we shall be led, occasionally, to advert to those which have been urged against revelation in general, and Christianity in particular: but we desire to separate ourselves from those who seek other aid than reason and argument, in support of their opinions—and with that view to make a few observations on the folly of persecution, for opinion's sake.

Unless Christians avow their sense of the injustice of persecuting sentiment, they cannot justify an appeal to argument, against what appear to them to be erroneous tenets. Reason and the Statute Book cannot, on subjects of opinion, work together: the object of the one, is to convince—of the other, to silence. The use of the one, imports the right to dissent—the effect of the other, is to annul that right.

Man's distinguishing excellence is his power to reason: Christianity is an appeal to reason: it is necessarily established by moral evidence: having moral objects for its end—springing from the source of truth—it cannot need extrinsic coercive aid.

Jesus came to bear witness of the truth; he and his disciples knew it was mighty and would prevail, and they acted upon this conviction: Christians cannot use other weapons than those which he used. Reason and argument were sufficient in the infancy of Christianity—with these it did prevail; it overthrew the religion and the institutions of the countries in which it originated; in a comparatively short time it spread so greatly as to render it politic in Constantine to *profess* it; it was sustained under reproach and against persecutions, and surely we who say it is true must allow it will bear examination. "*He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that that they are wrought in God.*" Christians were tortured by a Nero, and their descendants have held his character in just detestation; but what difference is there *in principle*, between the persecutions of that age and those of the present? Principles are the same in all ages. Man cannot make them—they exist in the nature of things. Was persecution right then? If not—it cannot be so now!

It is as impolitic as unjust. Punish a man for publishing his opinions, and you rouse his feelings in their defence. Conviction is then hopeless. The sympathy of the indifferent,

and of the well disposed, is excited in his favour; the obnoxious sentiment is forgotten in the injustice of the punishment.

In the minds of his disciples the sufferer becomes a martyr: they know that truth does not envelop itself in mystery; and they conclude that that argument must be strong, which is suppressed. Punishment canonizes the sufferer and sanctifies his faith.

Punishment spreads a sentiment, whether true or false, by the sympathy which it excites for the sufferer, and by the energy arising from the sense of injustice with which it inspires him. When the proto-martyr, Stephen, was massacred, "*there was a great persecution against the church, which was at Jerusalem; and they*" (the disciples) "*were all scattered abroad, throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles; and they that were scattered abroad WENT EVERY WHERE PREACHING THE WORD.*"

Truth, it is said, is omnipotent—then it will subdue error. Revelation is true—then it will subdue irreligion. It proceeds from God—then its course cannot be arrested. It is a message of peace—then it must be conveyed in the spirit of peace. It proceeds from the mercy of God—then it must be conveyed in benevolence to man. Its object is to lead man to virtue and happiness—then, if he neglect it, he does so in his *own wrong*; he is the creature of motive, and we may safely trust to his adopting that, in the end, which is so manifestly to his advantage!

Persecution can only act upon the open, and so far honest opponent; the insidious adversary escapes. Modern times have evidenced this in our own country, in the instances of Paine and Gibbon. Paine openly attacked revelation; and gave its advocates the opportunity of repelling his abuse, and answering his arguments. Gibbon, in his celebrated historical work, covertly sought to undermine its evidences; but when challenged, by an enlightened and liberal advocate of Christianity, (Dr. Priestley) to the open discussion of its truth, declined it. The insidious adversary was honoured; the open opponent was persecuted. Neither the one nor the other ought to have been persecuted; but least of all should he who fairly and openly challenged the discussion.

Punishment may thus confirm hypocrisy—it cannot change or even suppress opinion.

Persecution has been the reproach of nearly all sects, when power has fallen into their hands. The Catholic has

burnt the Protestant—the Protestant the Catholic; and when that gentle and religious “Defender of the Faith,” the Eighth Henry, fell out with the pope, both sects met at the same stake; and through the succeeding reigns of Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, and James, the alternations of power produced only a change in the victims.

Whenever the hireling in religion has abounded, persecution has most flourished. Priests and the inquisition are found associated in the records of history, and where they have had most influence ignorance has most prevailed. Persecution has been, generally speaking, most violent where the power and revenues of the clergy have been the greatest. Crusades against knowledge and liberality, have been proportioned to the wealth, influence, and numbers of the clergy.

The Reformation, however, put the scriptures into the hands of the laity; and the mild benevolence of their spirit soon produced a change in the spirit of the disinterested professors of Christianity. From that time the influence of the hireling has declined; the spirit of inquiry and benevolence, and the fruits of both, have shewn themselves in the increase of rational religion, and the social affections.

If we compare the persecutions prior to that event, with the prosecutions of our own time, though we shall see cause for deep regret, in that man is not generally emancipated from persecution on subjects of opinion; yet we shall see much to be grateful for in the march of liberality; enough to animate our efforts in its favour; enough to justify a conviction that the time will come when men will neither feel at liberty, nor disposed to go beyond their Master, who commenced his instruction by exhorting men to “*Hear and understand;*” and who ended them by saying “*Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?*”

In order to fortify our views by history, let us, for example, recall to our minds the situation of the Waldenses, and the degree of light to which they had attained. Their origin was about the twelfth century. Their heresy consisted in believing in but one God; and that bishops and pastors ought to be irreproachable in their lives and doctrines; that none should take upon them these offices for the sake of dishonest gain, or as having any lordship over the people, but as being sincerely an example to the flock; and that believers should take heed and beware of false teachers, whose scope and aim is (as they expressed it) “to turn the people aside from the true worship which belongs to our only

“God and Lord, and to lean upon creatures, and to trust in them; as likewise to forsake those good works which are contained and required in the holy scriptures, and to do those which are only invented by men.”

The corruptions and wickedness of the Romish priests were here too plainly pointed at, not to subject the professors of those sentiments to their tender mercies.

The Romish hierarchy was then in the zenith of its power. Even the forms of law were not necessary as the prelude to torture; and death, and that in its most hideous modes, was, for centuries, the fate of the unfortunate beings, who presumed to worship their Creator according to the dictates of their conscience.

“During the greatest part of the seventeenth century, those of the Waldenses who lived in the vallies of Piedmont—and who had embraced the doctrine, discipline, and practice, of the church of Geneva—were oppressed and persecuted in the most barbarous and inhuman manner, by the ministers of Rome. This persecution was carried on, with peculiar marks of rage and enormity, in the years 1655, 1656, and 1686, and seemed to portend nothing less than the total extinction of that unhappy people. The most horrid scenes of violence and bloodshed were exhibited in this theatre of papal tyranny. The few Waldenses that survived, were indebted for their existence and support to the intercession made for them by the English and Dutch governments, and also by the Swiss Cantons, who solicited the clemency of the Duke of Savoy on their behalf. Thus were the vallies of Piedmont dispeopled of its ancient inhabitants; and the lamp of heavenly light, which during a long succession of ages had here shined in resplendant lustre, was at length removed*.”

Shortly after the Reformation, this wholesale destruction of human agents was changed into the formal destruction of individuals; and we find an important confession of the effect which the spread of the scriptures had produced on the benevolent feelings of society, towards those who were thus persecuted.

Fuller, in his Church History, in relation to these burnings of heretics, so called, makes the following observations as to the reasons which induced the suspension of these horrid immolations in the reign of James the First.

“About this time,” he says, “a Spanish Arian, being condemned to die, was, notwithstanding, suffered to linger out his life in Newgate, where he ended the same. Indeed, such burnings of heretics much *startled* common people; pitying all in pain, and prone to asperse justice itself with cruelty, because of the hideousness of the punishment. And the purblind eyes of *vulgar* judgments looked only to what was next to them—the suffering

* Gregory's History of the Christian Church.

itself; which they beheld with compassion, not minding the demerit of the guilt which deserved the same. Besides, such being unable to distinguish betwixt constancy and obstinacy, were ready to entertain good thoughts even of the opinions of those heretics who sealed them so manfully with their blood. Wherefore, king James *politically* preferred that heretics hereafter, though condemned, should silently and privately *waste themselves away in the prison*, rather than to *grace* them and *amuse* others with the solemnity of a public execution, which, in popular judgments, *usurped* the honour of a persecution."

Time and Christianity have abolished these hideous burnings, and a limited imprisonment now supplies the place of torture unto death; whilst such has been the spread and influence of liberal sentiments that those who inflict even this punishment, feel bound to assign their reasons for its infliction, and to argue in its defence. The object of these prosecutions, as avowed by their supporters, is to prevent religion from being brought into contempt; but let this proposition be put in what terms it may, it is still but punishing men for not being hypocrites. Truth cannot be brought into contempt by abuse; and argument will establish it. Religion is an affair between God and man: it is the independent opinion of each individual man, as to God and his duties. It consists in opinion; the practice of the duties resulting from it constitutes morality. Religion, therefore, in its own nature, is, and must be, independent of the civil magistrate. Error carries within itself the seeds of its own dissolution; it will bring itself—not truth—into contempt. Let us put a case. Blasphemy—that is, as it is defined, to deny the existence or defame the attributes of God—is considered to be the worst species of heresy. Suppose a man were to proclaim, with the most industrious activity, that there is no such luminary as the sun. Should we feel alarmed for the opposite opinion? Would the believers in its existence, fear or smile at his notions? Or, suppose him to publish that its genial rays were destructive to vegetation; should we dread the spread of the sentiment, in opposition to facts and experience? And is not the existence—are not the attributes of God written in the scriptures, and confirmed by the works of creation, with the fullest evidence? Why fear the one, and not the other? The fact is, that persecution always proceeds from a conscious weakness in argument, or from the sinister impulses of interest.

This consciousness of error—influenced by the interest which the scribes, pharisees, and men in authority had in

existing abuses—was the proximate cause of the persecution and death of our Lord, and of most of his apostles.

“ In the audience of all the people, he (JESUS) said unto his disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts, which devour widows’ houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater condemnation.” (Luke xx. 45.) *“ And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him, for they feared the people; and they covenanted with Judas for money to betray him.”* (Luke xxii.) *“ And the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but Pilate said, I find no fault in him. What evil hath he done? But they cried, Crucify him! crucify him!”* (Luke xxiii. 14.)

A similar wickedness of motive led to the death of the first martyr for Christianity—Stephen. (Acts vi. 9.) *“ There arose certain of the synagogue disputing with Stephen. AND THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO RESIST THE WISDOM AND THE SPIRIT BY WHICH HE SPAKE. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council; and set up false witnesses, which said, this man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered us.”* And they heard his defence until he declared that their fathers had persecuted the prophets—and themselves the betrayers and murderers of Jesus; then, *“ they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth; cried out with a loud voice; stopped their ears; ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him.”*

We will take but one more illustrative instance from the scriptures.

“ Paul sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. And there arose no small stir about that way;” (the teaching of Christianity.) *“ For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation; and said, sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but*

"almost throughout Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands: so that not only our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were FULL OF WRATH, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

These instances, and the previous reasoning, will, it is thought, be sufficient to shew the impolicy, the injustice, and, generally speaking, the obliquity of the motives, which induce the persecutions against opinions. The spirit which, at that time, influenced the "craftsmen" in religion has continued the same to this day. What then, it may be asked, is to be done? Is it not the magistrates duty to take care of—to protect the morals of the people? Surely: but how is he to do this? By punishing immoral action, or by seeking to controul erroneous sentiment? The answer is given, by the practicability of discharging the one duty, and the impossibility of discharging the other. Who shall judge where all are equally parties? Men dissent from a mode of faith, because they think it false; and, from the nature of the case—in a dispute as to what is truth—no common standard will be admitted. Surely, in such case a government professing Christianity—a religion which had its inception, and was established under persecution—and which publishes, as its principles, love to God and man; and, as its rule of action, "*Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you:*"—surely such a government might be content to be instructed by Jesus and his apostles. "*The kingdom of heaven,*" (the Christian religion) said our Lord, "*is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field,*" but his enemy sowed tares. His servants inquired if they should gather them up. "*But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST:*" and, in explaining this parable to his disciples, he observed, "*The harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels:*" (the messengers of God.) "*The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and THEY shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.*"

Again: a dispute having arisen among the early converts, Paul thus writes, "*One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully*

"persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. LET US NOT, THEREFORE, JUDGE ONE ANOTHER ANY MORE; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brothers way. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

The absurdity of making the civil magistrate the judge of religious controversy is evidenced in this; he must, from the nature of his office, *"teach for doctrine, the commandments of men,"* or he must be left to determine at discretion. In the one case, the sufferer may reply, in the words of Peter, *"Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye;"* and, in the other, he can plead his equal right, as an individual, to follow the dictates of his own conscience. The authority of God, and conscience, may always be pleaded against human authority; and whilst a Protestant hierarchy maintain the right to dissent from the Catholic religion, yet contend against the same right in the dissenter, they commit a suicide in argument, and refutation becomes needless.

Christianity, we are taught to believe, will ultimately become universal; but, if the true religion can be determined by human authority, and men may be punished for writing or speaking against its decisions, how shall Christianity be spread where other modes of faith are established by law? And if we condemn the disciples of Muhammed for compelling Christians to avow a change of faith; what can we say for ourselves if we also use coercion?

Jesus opposed the established religion of his day; and he taught his disciples to follow in his steps. The priests of that day caused him to be crucified. Did they do right? Unless we can answer this in the affirmative, let those who profess the name of Christianity avoid the error of its enemies; bearing in mind the observation of Paul—*"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."*

VIRTUE AND CHARACTER.

It has been said, by the author of Lacon, "That virtue is uniform and fixed, because she looks for approbation only from him *'who is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever;'* that no man can purchase virtue too dearly, for it is the only thing whose value must ever increase with the price that it has cost, and integrity is never worth so much as when we have parted with our all to keep it." It is an error to represent virtue as a thing of easy attainment; were it so, it must lose much of its value, and the candidates for the prize would not be so thinly scattered over the earth. Virtue is not to be won by an entrance at the wide gate and the broad way; to arrive at it there is no royal road; but although the pursuit be difficult and arduous, yet even in the pursuit there is the highest degree of gratification—the most ample reward. *The means, too, are simple, and Christianity affords adequate motives for their accomplishment.* The first teachers of that religion are the models for all future generations; they taught the purest morality; they did more—they practised what they taught. Jesus, improving upon what had been said of "*old time,*" that "*thou shalt not commit adultery,*" commanded men not even to suffer their thoughts to cherish a desire for the crime; for if they did so they were morally guilty thereof.

About the teachings of this exalted man there was nothing mysterious, nothing impracticable. If you desire good fruit, the tree must *first* be good. If you are really benevolent perform not your good deeds for the purpose of being seen of men. If you are religious let actions, and not words, demonstrate it. Place no confidence in your having cried "*Lord, Lord,*" but in doing the will of the Supreme Being. If you are concerned at witnessing the defects of others—the motes in their eyes—*first* take the beam out of your own. If you are exalted in situation, or possessed of talent, yet "*be clothed with humility; humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord; and he will exalt you; hearken unto me, and understand, there is nothing from without a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things that come out of him, these are they which defile him.*" For, "*If a man purge himself, he shall be a vessel unto honour, and prepared for every good work. Flee youthful lusts—follow righteousness, benevolence, and peace.*"

We have been led into these remarks by turning over the leaves of a Common Place Book, and meeting with a singular extract relative to the character of Jesus; not singular so much for the well-expressed truths which it really contains, as on account of the *source* from whence those truths proceeded.

“Whether the account of the life of Christ is established upon sufficient evidence or not, we think it will be universally admitted that, according to that statement, he was **the greatest character that ever dignified the page of history**. He was the most consistent, disinterested, wise, pure, and perfect; all his thought, words, and actions originated in, and were devoted to, a veneration for God and love to man. He was the best of teachers—in that best of sciences—morality. He was more than a patriot, for he was the greatest of reformers and philanthropists—living and laying down his life wholly for the good of mankind.”—*Criticism on Haydon's Picture*.—*Examiner*, May 7, 1820.

Similar opinions, concerning the character of Jesus, have been expressed by Paine, by Raynall, and Rousseau; and yet these latter writers, whilst they fully admitted the existence of such a person as Jesus, and the reality of the virtues ascribed to him, were so inconsistent as to hold that his pretensions were false, and his religion an imposition. We take the above description of Jesus (which we hold not to be too highly coloured, for what language can adequately describe *such* a man?) as the criterion of a really virtuous character. It has been said he taught a strict morality; he did do so; but, unlike other teachers, his life was a comment upon his doctrines; but can morality be too strict, can virtue be too severe? It has been said of the English code of laws, that they are “complex and incongruous.” The laws of Jesus are, at once, few and simple; the student of *his* code must improve by communing with his own heart—he must be prepared to submit to difficulties, to suffering, and to calumny. If he succeed in overcoming them, and himself, his success is accompanied by increased excellence of character. He is called upon to reason right from right principles; to have his mind clear, his eye single, and his whole body full of light; to have no competitors but those engaged, like himself, in endeavouring to “*be perfect even as their heavenly Father is perfect*,” to imitate the character of Jesus, whose virtue was ever consistent, and was so; because, in the language of the Examiner, “all his thoughts, words, and actions *originated* in, and were devoted to, a veneration for God, and love to man.” To ourselves, and to all who desire to be really virtuous, we say, in the words of Jesus, “*GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE*.”

NOTICES.

The following Subjects are appointed by the Church of God, denominated Freethinking Christians, for the instruction of the Public on the Sunday Mornings, at their Meeting-house, Crescent, Jewin Street, Aldersgate Street.—The Business commences at Eleven o'Clock PRECISELY.

Uncorrupted Christianity: a view of its practical application to the three stages of human life—youth, maturity, and old age.—April 6.

A review of the arguments in favour of the existence of a being called the Devil.—April 13.

An inquiry into the claims of pure Christianity, to be considered “a reasonable service.”—April 20.

Religious Persecution—its history, nature, and objects.—April 27.

The causes and comparative effects of Fanaticism and Infidelity.—May 4.

The character of Jesus as a moral teacher.—May 11.

The church of Rome and the reformed churches—in what points do they agree with each other, and in what do they all differ from the church of God?—May 18.

The scripture doctrines of Repentance and Conversion.—May 25.

The claims of the Clergy to scriptural authority and moral usefulness considered.—June 1.

The causes which induce mankind to submit to the yoke of priestcraft.—June 8.

The church of God—its progress and character, from the earliest times to its complete establishment in the apostolic age.—June 15.

The Character and Attributes of Deity—with a view to ascertain the true relation in which man stands to his Maker.—June 22.

The truth and meaning of the common assertion, that the present is—“a religious age.”—June 29.

From pre-existing engagements we are not, at this time, enabled to present our readers with the Article on ‘The Being and Attributes of a God;’ and we are advised that J. N.’s letter cannot be published, with safety, by itself.

A gross and convicted libeller asserts that our Publication “can have no end in view but the *subversion of public morals*, by the inculcation of ‘freethinking’ principles.” This is an accusation which even the respectable of his own party will disown. In a communication from the Provisional Committee for conducting the subscription for the sufferers in Syria, our Work is recognized as a “valuable publication,” and this by Mr. ALDERMAN ATKINS, ROBT. HUMPHREY MARTIN, Esq. and other gentlemen of the committee, equally conspicuous for their loyalty and orthodoxy. For ourselves, we confess we are not absolutely overcome either by the censure of the one party, or the praises of the other.

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THE
FREETHINKING
CHRISTIANS'
QUARTERLY REGISTER.

ON RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.—ESSAY III.

“What is man?

Where must he find his Maker? with what rites

Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?

Or does he sit regardless of his works?

—’Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts.”—*Cowper’s Task, Book II.*

PUBLIC SOCIAL PRAYER—has this practice the sanction of scripture, and of the example of Jesus and his disciples? Is it a rational and a useful practice? Or, is it not, on the contrary, equally unsupported by scripture and by reason? These are the questions which I now purpose to discuss—questions comparatively new to the religious world; for, although many of the remains of paganism, and the corruptions of popery, have been removed, or reformed, *this* practice has, at least till within a very few years past, not been questioned by any religious body.

The church of God, commonly called the Freethinking Christians, have, after a full and conscientious investigation of the subject, abandoned, some years since, the practice of praying *in public*, either socially, or individually. Of prayer, indeed, as a privilege granted to the Christian, but not as a duty binding on all mankind, they are warm advocates; but that which they contend for is, the prayer of the heart and the closet: prayer as directed by Jesus, and as sanctioned, according at least to their views, by reason and the nature of things.

Knowing their views on this and on some other important

VOL. I. NO. III.

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points to be peculiar, they have availed themselves of every means within their power, to bring them into discussion amongst the more enlightened professors of religion. Their efforts were chiefly addressed to the *Unitarian body*, as the most rational in their views, and as *professing* more than any other to act on the principles of free inquiry. All such endeavours, on their part, have, however, as will be seen by the following brief narrative of facts, to their great regret, proved almost, if not altogether, in vain. Having but too much reason to believe that, against them, as the opponents of priestcraft under all its forms, the pages of the *Monthly Repository*, the organ of the Unitarian body, were effectually closed,* they themselves engaged in the publication of a

* How far we could entertain any reasonable hopes of being fairly heard in the pages of the *Monthly Repository*, may be well estimated (amongst others which might be adduced) by the following remarkable circumstance: An effort was made, in the year 1808, by the then Lord Mayor, (Ansley) at the instigation of the then Bishop of London, (Porteus) to suppress the meetings of the Christian church, (known by the name of the Freethinking Christian church) and to refuse licences to its teachers. As a public journalist, the Editor of the *Monthly Repository* undertook to record the *successful* resistance of the members to these efforts of illiberality and persecution. But in what manner, and in what terms? The parties are described, indeed, in one part (see the number for May 1808) as acting "with a perseverance and "boldness which did them honour;" but they are also contemptuously spoken of as *formidable* speakers, belonging to a *little* society, with a *portentous* name; terms trifling in themselves, yet well shewing the *spirit* in which the Editor of the *Monthly Repository* was willing to lend his aid to *protect* this dissenting church from the persecution of the civil power! More than this—the Freethinking Christians, by one of their members, had appealed to the body of dissenters, on the ground that the rights of conscience had been violated in their persons. How did the *Monthly Repository* answer this appeal? We quote their words on the occasion. "*Dissenters in general regard their meeting-houses as places of worship, and do not feel any particular sympathy with one debating society more than another—with a society that debates on Sunday, more than one that debates on Monday—with one that debates theology, more than one that debates politics.*" And yet the Editor of this work was well aware, of his own *personal knowledge*, that the body in question was *not*, in the common acceptation of the word, a *debating society*—but a religious society—a *Christian church*, whose aim and profession it was to be framed on the model of the primitive church, as described in the New Testament; but who had been guilty of the never-to-be-forgiven sins—the dispensing with the priest, and acting upon the Christian principles of searching the scriptures and judging *for themselves* that which is right. What follows, however, is yet more to our present point. Feeling, not merely themselves, but the cause of religious liberty in general injured by such language, from such a quarter, the church deputed one of its members to write a reply to the above attack upon them, for insertion in the *Monthly Repository*. The individual so employed was Mr. Thomas Anthony Teulon,

periodical work, which, under the title of *The Freethinking Christians' Magazine*, was published monthly throughout the years 1811, 12, 13, and 14; in which work they strongly and especially invited the communications of the Unitarians—particularly of their teachers—but without effect.

After the close of this work, unwilling, whilst a chance of success remained, to lose an opportunity of publicly discussing the important points of difference between the Unitarians and ourselves, some individual members of our church attended, on several occasions, the "*Winter Evening Unitarian Conferences*," held at Hackney; and there, by proposing certain subjects for discussion, and speaking upon others already adopted, endeavoured to bring the important questions of *public social prayer*, and *pulpit preaching*, as Christian ordinances, into debate. By every means, however—and, looking at the facts of the case,

at that time a member, and who had previously been a frequent and a favoured contributor to the *Universalist's Miscellany*, when under the auspices of Mr. Vidler. *This reply was not inserted.* The only notice taken of it was in the "*correspondence*," at the end of the June number, where the Editor states that he has received such a letter, and adds that "*had it answered its professed end—that of correcting the errors of their reporter—they would have gladly laid it before their readers.*" It should be borne in mind that this article, thus rejected, was not one respecting some theoretical point of controversy, in which the Editor would have been fully justified in exercising a sound discretion, whether to admit or reject, but that it was a reply, from the parties aggrieved, to his own published calumnies and misrepresentations. When *he himself*, therefore, informed his readers that the reply did "*not convict their reporter of one real error*," he acted as judge in his own cause; surely his readers, after hearing both sides, would have formed a more impartial tribunal! He proceeds, however, further than this, and actually gives a critique—a *candid* critique on this *suppressed* reply, describing it as being "*ill-written, frivolous, unintelligible, and boastful*," adding that, "*in becoming writers for the Monthly Repository, persons must restrain themselves within certain limits, viz. those of orthography, grammar, and sense.*" Now the varied *literary* accomplishments essential to forming a correspondent of the *Monthly Repository*, we did not then, any more than we do at present, feel any ambition to lay claim to; we are plain, unlettered men, seeking a plain, yet important object, namely, Christian truth; but it should be remembered that, in this case, the correspondence was not sought for upon our part, but that we claimed to be heard, even in our own unlettered way, in our own defence, when we had been traduced and misrepresented. At any rate, without further comment or illustration, the reader will see in the above, a sufficient justification of our assertion—that the pages of the *Monthly Repository* were, for the discussion of all points of difference in opinion, effectually closed against us. Other instances might be adduced to the same purport. We lament the fact, and shall, with pleasure, record the appearance of a better spirit, should such, at any future time, be exhibited.

they think themselves justified in saying by every artifice—which could be adopted, they were here prevented from fully explaining their views, or bringing these questions fairly under discussion. Any particular details on this subject it is not now my intention to give. The facts that we earnestly *sought* for inquiry into, amongst other subjects, the scriptural authority for public social prayer; and that, at least the *president* of the Hackney conferences, aided by one or two individuals of influence at the meeting, as anxiously *opposed*, and, as we think, *shrunk* from that inquiry, are all that we, at present, wish to establish and put on record.

The task of describing, particularly at a distant period, all the difficulties and embarrassments which, whilst preserving the *forms* of debate, may still, by men of talent and ability, be thrown in the way of free inquiry, is not an easy one; yet, if challenged to prove the assertions made above, we have by us sufficient materials fully to support our case. At the Hackney conferences our friends who attended were, indeed, never directly forbidden to speak; and on one occasion the subject of social prayer was actually spoken upon; yet, by adroitness and management, all *real* discussion of the question was as effectually avoided as though no opponents of the practice had been present. Whenever they appeared an endeavour, even previously to the discussion, was studiously made to raise a prejudice against them, as intruders and disturbers of the harmony of the meeting; *repeated* efforts were made, by one or two individuals, to fix on them the charge of disorderly and indecorous conduct, and “by every specious and plausible” insinuation, to degrade the speaker, the more effectually “to paralyze the thing spoken;” they were even, on more than one occasion, *prayed at*, in the opening petition of the president; and prescribed forms of debate which, at least as far as they saw, or have learned, *were never, or but rarely, enforced against others*, were rigorously, and almost invariably, enforced against them. The chief of these was the rule that each speaker should not exceed *one quarter of an hour*; a rule which, without objection being raised, they have seen more than once infringed upon, by the fanatic, and even the deist; and yet oftener by the president himself; but which (particularly on the occasion above referred to, when *social prayer* was the subject of inquiry) was endeavoured to be enforced with strictness against the members of the Free-thinking Christian church. When to this is added that the

greater part of the short space allotted to the conference was occupied by singing, a prayer, and an opening speech, on the part of the president, *before* the discussion; and that time was always to be reserved for a closing speech, also, on the part of the president, for another prayer, and, if we recollect aright, another hymn at parting—when it is stated that our friends were constantly and systematically interrupted, and informed that they could not enter on certain points which, at least, *they* thought to the subject under discussion, an obstruction which they saw confined almost exclusively to themselves—and which occupied no small portion of the quarter of an hour to which they were confined—when it is observed that no adjournment was, on any account, allowed, however large or important the subject, or whatever difference of opinion might arise in its discussion—when it is remembered that the subjects chosen were *generally*, and, we think we may say, *studiously*, such as in no way touched upon the points in difference between us—and that, although the proposing of questions for a future season was permitted to the audience, yet that those proposed by our friends were at first dropt in silence; and, when they respectfully pressed for an answer, were rejected with anger and acrimony—when these circumstances are considered, our readers will probably agree with us in thinking that it was in vain to look for a discussion of the differences subsisting between the Unitarians and ourselves, at the “Winter Evening Hackney Conferences.” Of the want, not only of candour and true liberality, but even of attention to the common courtesies of life, and civilities of society, which our friends met with on these occasions, they have not thought it worth their while to complain; but they *did* lament, and *they still do lament*, that so fair an opportunity, for so valuable a purpose, should have been lost; and that talent which they could not but admire, should be thus turned to a purpose which they could not do otherwise than deprecate.

As, amongst other reasons for not entering on the special subjects of difference between us, the peculiar rules of the conference and fixed nature of the subjects, were pleaded; the Freethinking Christian church determined themselves to hold conferences, at which these objections could not be adduced. During the months of January, February, and March 1816, they announced, therefore, “Winter Evening Conferences,” at their own place of meeting, in the Crescent, Jewin Street. Amongst the questions there proposed, was the following: “*Is public social worship founded*

"on expediency or scriptural authority?" A copy of the hand bill, which was distributed at the doors of the Unitarian chapels on this occasion, now lies before the writer. It is headed "*An Appeal to Conscientious Unitarians;*" and after some strictures, pointed, indeed, yet but too well founded, upon the then recent conduct of one or two "privileged individuals," at the Hackney conferences, it contains the following invitation: "*Intelligent and candid Unitarians are respectfully solicited to attend these conferences—they are promised an impartial hearing, and shall be allowed the precedence (PARTICULARLY UNITARIAN TEACHERS) to all other speakers.*" A copy of this announcement was forwarded to Mr. Aspland, Mr. Vidler, Mr. Belsham, Mr. Gilchrist, Dr. Rees, Mr. T. Rees, and other Unitarian teachers, in or near the metropolis, accompanied by an official letter from the Secretary of the Church, in which the following passages occurred: "To invite you, Sir,—to request your company at this conference is the object of my now addressing you. In your situation, as a public teacher, it will occur to you that the Unitarian body will naturally look up to you as one of the chief defenders of its practices; and every lover of truth will, as naturally, avail himself with eagerness of an opportunity thus presented, of either himself receiving, or communicating truth to others." After adverting to the recognized principles of free inquiry, in consistency with which, under the circumstances of the case, these individuals must have felt compelled to meet us, this circular thus proceeds; "I have now only to state the terms on which we wish to meet you. On the points in difference we believe that we have truth and argument on our side; as men, however, and fallible men, we are aware that we may be mistaken, and we therefore are the more anxious to hear fairly stated, the opinions of those who differ from us. For this purpose, therefore, we invite and earnestly request *your* presence. You will be heard in preference to ourselves—in preference to others; we shall be glad—the more glad—to hear you, because you profess to think us in error. Meet us—and we will listen to you readily. Convince us—and we will own our error. Hear us—and we will give our reasons and our arguments. Truth is our only object, and we wish to seek it, wherever it may be found. Should, therefore, any *other* means, in addition to the above, present themselves to you, by which it may be gained, we make it a request that you will point them out to us. *On all occasions, and in every place, we shall be happy to meet you, to discuss the differences (of opinion)*

"subsisting between the Unitarian body and ourselves. The time, the place, and manner, so as they be consistent with Christian principle, and the laws of fair discussion, we leave to your appointment."

This invitation, addressed, as has been stated, to *all* the Unitarian teachers in or near London, was accepted by *none* of them. Considerable numbers of the Unitarian body attended without, however, entering into the discussion; which they, naturally enough, left to their hired teachers. But evening succeeded evening, and neither Mr. Aspland, Mr. Vidler, Mr. Belsham, Mr. Gilschrist, Dr. Rees, Mr. T. Rees, nor any other of the parties thus pressing, but respectfully, invited, appeared to take part in this inquiry. Except in two instances no notice whatever was taken of the invitation. The exceptions were on the part of Mr. T. Rees, who pleaded the then state of his health, hinting, however, at *other* impediments! and of Mr. Belsham, who, in the first instance, sent a polite note, apparently approving highly of "*the proposed conference*," but stating that *it would not be in his power to attend it*. As he appeared from this note to suppose that the discussion was fixed for *one* evening only, the Secretary hastened to point out to him, in a second letter, that the conferences were to be continued through a period of some weeks; and as, by implication, Mr. Belsham had spoken very favourably of the objects of the intended discussions, the Secretary strongly pressed for "*the pleasure and the advantage of his company*." Mr. Belsham, in reply, "*begged leave to say once for all, that it SUITED NEITHER HIS INCLINATION NOR CONVENIENCE TO ATTEND THE PROPOSED CONFERENCES!!!*" There was, at least, openness and candour in this confession, and (*always excepting his having first implied an approval of our objects*) the avowal of this gentleman was certainly frankness itself, compared with the studied silence maintained by the other parties. We are constrained, indeed, to admit that Mr. Belsham, in this case, both for himself and his associates, spoke the plain and unvarnished truth. *Why* it should thus suit neither the "*inclinations nor the convenience*" of these gentlemen, to take a part in discussing the scripture authority and the rationality of *pulpit preaching, public social prayer, &c.*, we might not, if called upon, find it difficult to divine;—having stated the *facts*, however, we prefer leaving our readers to form their own conclusions.

It is sometimes curious to compare a man's professions with his actions: his theory with his practice. With this view I would observe that Mr. Belsham, well known, not

only as an able; but also as a voluminous controversialist, has lately published Two Sermons, preached at Essex-street; *"the first, on the Love of Truth; the second, on the Benefits arising from Theological Controversy."* A brief extract or two from these sermons of Mr. Belsham, compared with the conduct of this gentleman on the above occasion, may prove not a little edifying. *"The sincere lover of truth"* (he says) *"will never cease to inquire, as long as the powers of intellect and investigation remain."* (P. 20.) But what, if it should not *"be in the power of the sincere lover of truth to attend to inquiry!"* *"In the open ground of fair discussion, truth must possess a decided advantage over error, which must eventually be beaten from the field; nor is there any other way of vanquishing error, but by fair and liberal discussion."* (P. 43.) But what, if it should not agree with the inclination of a public teacher to enter on *"the open ground of fair discussion!"* Again: *"Controversy is a rugged road, but it leads to a most important termination; AND IT MUST NOT BE DESERTED BY THE TRAVELLER WHO IS IN SEARCH OF TRUTH."* But what, if, upon certain points, it should not suit the convenience of the traveller to follow in this *"rugged road!"* Few know better than Mr. Belsham, gifted, as he is, with no common powers of mind and clearness of intellect, the construction fairly to be put upon such conduct. We are anxious that our readers should observe, that the subjects thus avoided were chiefly the *payment of priests*, and the practices of *public social prayer* and *pulpit preaching*, which alone make priests necessary. Mr. Belsham does not thus avoid controversy where (as respecting the person of Christ, the Atonement, &c.) he feels himself to be in the right.

It would probably be deemed uncandid in us, judging of intentions by actions, to assert that this able and eager controversialist, together with his reverend brethren, were kept from the field of inquiry by a consciousness that our views were correct and scriptural; and a fear lest, by discussion of these points, their craft should be put in danger of being set at nought. But thus much we are compelled to confess on their parts—that had they actually *been* influenced by such a consciousness, and such a fear, they could not have acted otherwise than precisely as they did on this occasion. For all knowledge of human nature, in general, and all experience of theological controversy, in particular, tend to the establishment of this principle—that, under one pretence or other, with which they have deceived others, and perhaps even themselves, it has ever been the party secretly conscious of having a weak and unscriptural

cause to defend, that has shrunk from, and avoided discussion and inquiry.*

Various other efforts, on the same subject, have been met in a spirit not dissimilar to that above recorded. Mr. T. A. Teulon, at that time a member of the Freethinking Christian church, in a letter addressed to Mr. Vidler, printed in the year 1805, subjoined, what he termed "*An Examination of Mr. R. Wright's Essay on the Object, Nature, and Design of Religious Worship*," then just published; in which he maintained, briefly, but ably, that the practice of public social prayer was, at once, irrational and unscriptural.

In more than one article of the periodical Work already referred to—the Freethinking Christians' Magazine,† a similar position was supported; the space there devoted to the subject admitted, however, of little more than general views, the writers not professing to enter into the details of the subject. Still they had there put their sentiments upon record; besides which, we not unfrequently made the question the subject of express inquiry and investigation at our public meetings; whilst our views were practically enforced by our example as a religious body.

The Unitarians, however, or their teachers, though investigation was thus continually courted, maintained, apparently, a guarded silence. Endeavours similar to those made by the London branch of our church, to induce the Unitarians in that place to discuss this subject, have been likewise made by some of our country friends, in their several neighbourhoods, and with similar success. In the year

* As in a former note we gave the implied censure of the editor of the Monthly Repository to the *debatings* of the Freethinking Christian church, it may not be amiss, besides adverting to the fact that Mr. Aspland was the regular president or chairman of the Hackney conferences, which, even more strictly than our public meetings, formed a *debating society*, to take this opportunity of treating our readers with the bold and admirably expressed sentiments of Mr. Belsham on this subject. "Man has a right," (he says) "and it is his imperative duty—whether by instruction, or catechism, or conversation, or conference, or *debate*, public or private; whether by writing or by printing and publishing, or by public preaching or teaching, from house to house, or by holding forth in the market place, the fields, or the highway; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear—to promulgate what he believes to be essential or highly important truth; and to protest against what, in his estimation, is pernicious error." See "*The Rights of Conscience Asserted and Defended.—By Thomas Belsham.*" Upon some such principles and feelings as these we have acted towards the Unitarian body, and our reward is briefly detailed above. As far as we may without presumption, we would adopt the language of the apostle, and exclaim to them "*forgive us this wrong!*"

† See Vol. I. (year 1811) p. 501, and Vol. IV. (year 1814) p. 71,

1818, some Unitarians (as appears from a letter now lying before me) requested and obtained, for Mr. Wright, the "*Unitarian Missionary*," and the author of the "*Essay on Religious Worship*," the use of the meeting-house of the Dewsbury (Yorkshire) branch of our church. After the singing, prayer, and preaching, one of our members, exercising a right which had previously been stipulated for, stood up and combatted the practice of *public social prayer*. "Mr. Wright," we are told, "and the friends who accompanied him, paid marked attention; and when our member sat down, Mr. Wright got up and said '*he was about to publish a pamphlet on that subject; and, on that account, declined giving a verbal reply.*'" The pamphlet, being his second on the subject, accordingly, soon afterwards appeared, entitled "*Thoughts on Social Prayer; intended to shew its reasonableness and consistency with the New Testament—1818.*" But Mr. Wright therein cautiously abstained from naming the Freethinking Christians, though his work was evidently intended as a reply to their arguments. To this second pamphlet, a member of our body, Mr. Samuel Thompson, published a reply, answering Mr. Wright's arguments, paragraph by paragraph, and inviting him to a similar mode of rejoinder. Five years have, however, since elapsed, and Mr. Wright has not accepted the invitation.

In the same year (1818) a yet more direct effort had been made at Cranbrook, in Kent, by a body of individuals, who have since united themselves with us in Christian fellowship, to induce Mr. Wright to discuss this subject; one of these individuals, well known to Mr. Wright, and who was formerly himself a pulpit preacher, although no hireling, thus writes: "In or about the month of May 1818, prior to our organization, but after we had separated from the Unitarians, Mr. Wright was at Cranbrook. My brothers and self spent an evening at a friend's house in his company, and the leading members of the Society called General Baptists. The chief topic of conversation was the nature of a Christian church. During the evening Mr. Wright said he should preach on priestcraft, and invited us to hear. We said if we might be permitted to speak after him we would attend; but the persons present ruled—that theirs was pulpit preaching, exclusively, and we did not attend. On the Sunday we altered the time of our afternoon meeting till *their* meeting broke up, and sent an invitation to Mr. Wright to meet us, to discuss the subject of *public social prayer*, after he had finished his work at the chapel—but *he declined!*"

This, it may be observed, was *previous* to the publication of his second tract. Nearly two years *afterwards*, at another place, Mr. Wright maintained the same caution. "In June 1820," (I quote the words of a member of the *Battle* (Sussex) branch of our church) "In June 1820, Mr. Wright was again at this place. We sent a note to him, inviting him to meet us in conference on the subject of *public social prayer*, or on any other subject on which we differed from the Unitarians. We saw him afterwards, and asked him whether he intended to meet us. 'It had been arranged,' he said, 'that he should preach in different places on every evening in the week, except Saturday; but that he should be at Battle again in about a fortnight, and he would then give us an answer.' But when he came again he had the same excuse as before."

Now Mr. Wright was, at this time, travelling under the name of a "missionary," for the purpose of disseminating and discussing the doctrines and practices of Unitarianism. Had the author of "*The Anti-satisfactionist*" (a work, for ability and completeness, with but few rivals in theological controversy) been invited to discuss the doctrine of the Atonement, would he have shrunk from *that* inquiry? Yet the writer of the "*Essay on Religious Worship*," and the "*Thoughts on Social Prayer*," could travel from the southern shores of Sussex, northward, as far as Yorkshire, *declining* to discuss, verbally, the practice of social prayer! Did he, in this, appear to feel that firm confidence which ever attends truth and a just cause?

Since writing the above sentence, and whilst this sheet was finally preparing for the press, I have met (stitched in the Monthly Repository for April last) with "The Unitarian Fund Register, No. 2," which contains Mr. Wright's journal of his last missionary journey. The following extract, compared with Mr. Wright's conduct respecting the controversy on social prayer, &c., as detailed above, may well serve to throw light upon the subject.

"*Audlem*" (he says) "is a village nine miles from Nantwich. Here I preached in the open air, to a large congregation. When I had done, a methodist preacher stepped forward and said—'I also come here to preach, and I shall preach; but I shall not take any particular subject, but address you on the strange doctrines you have heard to-night.' On this I went and stood by the side of him." (The very thing which our friends endeavoured, in vain, to induce Mr. Wright to do.) "He began with a direct attack on Unitarians and their doctrine; but before he had gone on many minutes, fell into gross misrepresentation. On this I stepped forward, and said—'I am sorry to interrupt the good man at my right hand; but, as I came here in hostility to on

man, or party of men, but simply to state what I believe to be the truth of the gospel, which I have done plainly, without shewing hostility to other parties, I cannot remain silent when I hear our views grossly misrepresented, and false charges openly alleged against us.' I then explained the Unitarian doctrine, as far as was necessary to set aside this misrepresentation. Having done this, I stopped, and he went on; but it was not long before I had to stop him again, in consequence of false statements he was giving. Thus we went on alternately, for a considerable time." (Precisely the manner in which we have sought, but in vain, to discuss with the Unitarians the subjects of social prayer, pulpit preaching, &c.) "At length he closed the meeting in the usual way. I, throughout, confined myself to explaining our views; and interrupted him only so far as was necessary to refute his false charges and misrepresentations." (The very attempt to do which, in other cases, even when not done by means of "interruption," has exposed us to the severest charges of want of candour and liberality.) "At the close of the business, a young man, a local (Unitarian) preacher, who was with us from Nantwich, gave notice that he should be there again on the following Sunday morning, to deliver a discourse on the doctrines for which the Methodist had contended that evening; and the Methodist gave notice that he also would be there to preach in reply, when the other had done. I afterwards learned" (adds Mr. Wright) "that my young friend, and some others with him, were there, and preached as he had engaged to do; BUT THE METHODIST DID NOT APPEAR."

On reading this final remark, the first idea that occurred to me was, that had this Methodist preacher been pressed to state the real cause of his absence, it would not improbably have been "*that it suited neither his inclination, nor his convenience to attend.*" The reader, indeed, cannot have perused this extract without having been induced, involuntarily, to run a parallel between Mr. Wright's conduct, on this occasion, and our conduct with respect to social prayer, pulpit preaching, &c. on many occasions; whilst on *these* subjects, surely the facts already stated will justify me in saying that Mr. Wright's conduct has certainly not been *better* than that of the Methodist preacher in question; who, at any rate, bore with repeated interruption, and allowed Mr. Wright to refute what he deemed *his* false charges, and gross misrepresentations, and to explain his own views. How often, on the important points we wished discussed, when our friends have invited, requested, almost entreated the presence of Mr. Wright, and other Unitarian teachers, to meet them, and reply to their arguments, if they deemed them erroneous, how often could *they* have adopted the significant and emphatic conclusion of Mr. Wright, and have exclaimed—"BUT THE UNITARIAN DID NOT APPEAR!"

Having mentioned Battle, in Sussex, we may here observe that, so late as the month of March last, a Mr. Taplin, in a course of Sunday Evening Lectures, at the Unitarian chapel of that place, having taken *public social prayer* as one of his subjects, and having quoted Mr. Thompson's reply to

Mr. Wright, in what was thought, by some present, an incomplete and garbled manner, our friends to *him* also delivered, in public, a written invitation to discuss the subject with them before his audience. Having applied, after an interval of a week, for an answer, they received a letter from Mr. Taplin, "*declining any public controversy with them.*"

In the year 1821, Mr. Thomas Moore, another Unitarian preacher, published his "*Inquiry into the Scriptural Authority for Social Worship,*" in the advertisement to which he speaks of "*new circumstances,*" which may render a new publication on the practice desirable; and adverts to some "*doubts which had been occasioned by recent publications on the subject.*" Why *he* also, like his predecessor in the controversy, Mr. Wright, neither states the *circumstances*—into which his readers might then have inquired; nor names the *publications*—which they might then have read for themselves; it will remain for himself, if he should so choose, to explain.

In the statement thus made, I have endeavoured, whilst narrating facts, supported in several points by documentary evidence, to avoid, as far as the case would possibly admit, any thing which might appear to be mere inference or useless personality. In fairly stating such a case, to avoid the mention of *names* of individuals who act in a *public* capacity, would have been evidently impossible; but, whilst doing this, I have, I *can* have, no personal object in view. If in any point I am mistaken, I shall be most ready to confess the error, for I should be glad to find, if it could possibly be proved so, that the Unitarian leaders generally, have *not* acted the part, or been led by the motives, to the suspicion of which their conduct appears so justly liable.

In the absence, as it would really appear, of any better plea, the objection stated on their part to the discussion of this or other subjects with us has been—that, if they met us, we should treat the parties with undue personality, and in an uncandid manner. This is an objection easily made *by* any party, and *against* any party; whilst it is one which cannot so easily be disproved. Although, in our case, unfounded, I shall not, therefore, *attempt* to disprove it; but shall content myself with saying thus much. The charges of personality and want of candour in their opponents, are never used by these same individuals, as reasons why they should not enter into the controversy respecting the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, &c., where they feel strong and

confident in a good cause.* Further, if we are to look to Jesus and his apostles as examples and patterns for our conduct, the charges of personality and want of candour were never by *them* used as reasons for declining discussion, and avoiding, when called upon, to give a public reason for the faith which was in them. The fact is, that if a party, in any controversy, adopt undue means, or use improper language, the disgrace recoils upon themselves, and on their cause. The Unitarian teachers, therefore, if our weapons *be* unfair ones, may the more readily accept a challenge, which, upon their own shewing, if correct, must the more certainly and speedily end in our defeat and their triumph. But the assertion, we can have little hesitation in saying, must be a pretence only. We have been met, in this matter, with gross personalities;—*we* have encountered, as above stated, many instances of want of true candour and liberality, yet we do not, *therefore*, refuse inquiry and avoid discussion. The questions of social prayer and pulpit preaching, we conceive to be—not personal questions—but connected with fundamental principles relative to the Christian church; we, *therefore*, press for their discussion. To all charges against ourselves, personally, in this matter, our calm and constant reply is—“*Strike, but hear us!*”

Do the Unitarians *deny* the charge that they have thus *shrunk* from this inquiry? They have themselves the power effectually to repel it, by *now* accepting that discussion, and *now* entering upon that inquiry, TO WHICH, UPON THE SAME TERMS, WE STILL INVITE THEM. This is a challenge not given to individuals, amongst whom there will exist shades of difference, about which the public may be well supposed wholly indifferent, but it is directed to THE UNITARIANS AS A BODY, AND TO THEIR PUBLIC TEACHERS AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVES. We assert that the practices of *having paid teachers*, of *pulpit preaching*, and of *public social prayer*, are not only unsupported by the scriptures, but are wholly inconsistent with the fundamental principles of Christianity. On these points, particularly, we *ONCE MORE* invite the Unitarian teachers (aided, as they are, by learning

* We have just seen, when a Methodist preacher “*made gross misrepresentations, beginning with a direct attack on Unitarians and their doctrine,*” that Mr. Wright, instead of therefore withdrawing from the contest, *manfully* stepped forward, declaring that he “*could not remain silent when their views were grossly misrepresented, and false charges openly alleged against them.*” Doubtless Mr. Wright felt that the *more* gross the misrepresentation, and the *more* false the charges, the more easily he would be enabled to explain the one, and confute the other.

and acquirements of various kinds, to the possession of which we do not pretend) publicly to meet us. If they still decline this inquiry, we must leave the public, or those, at least, who are disposed to reflect and to reason, to determine between us.

Having been led to notice various works on the present subject, it would be incorrect here to omit the mention of Gilbert Wakefield's well known pamphlet, first published in the year 1791, entitled "*An Inquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public or Social Worship*;" and afterwards re-published in 1792, with alterations on some important points. This work, as being the first, at least in modern times, especially written to oppose the practice of public social prayer, excited considerable attention at the time, and called forth replies from the pens of various writers. The answers of Dr. Priestly, John Pope, and Letitia Barbauld, are the most celebrated; replies were also published by another female controversialist, under the *nom de guerre* of Eusebia; by Dr. Disney, James Wilson of Stockport, Thomas Jervis, William Perry, John Simpson, ——— Bruckner, &c.*

* The titles, &c. of some of these replies to Gilbert Wakefield, are as under:—we give them that the reader may, if he please, hear both sides of this controversy.

"Letters to a Young Man, occasioned by Mr. Wakefield's Essay on Public Worship.—By Joseph Priestly.—Lond. 1792."

"Divine Worship: Founded in Nature and Supported by Scriptural Authority—an Essay. With Remarks on Mr. Wakefield's Arguments against Public Worship.—By John Pope.—Lond. 1792."

"Remarks on Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Inquiry, &c.—By Anne Letitia Barbauld.—Lond. 1792."

"Cursory Remarks on Gilbert Wakefield's Inquiry.—By Eusebia.—Lond. 1792." The Second Edition of which contained a P. S. in the way of rejoinder to Gilbert Wakefield's Reply.

"A Defence of Public or Social Worship.—A Sermon preached in the Unitarian Chapel, Essex Street.—Lond. 1791.—By James Disney, F. S. A.—Lond. 1792."

"A Vindication of Public Social Worship: containing an Examination of the Evidence concerning it in the New Testament, and of Mr. Wakefield's Inquiry into its Propriety and Expediency.—By W. Perry.—London 1792."

"Christian Arguments for Social and Public Worship.—A Sermon preached before an Annual Assembly of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, at the Chapel in Lewin's Mead, Bristol, on the 13th of April, 1792.—By John Simpson—Bath 1792."

"The Social Worship of the one God agreeable to Reason and Scripture;—A Sermon preached in the chapel, Princes Street, Westminster, March 27, 1796.—By Thomas Jervis."

Gilbert Wakefield favoured Dr. Priestly with a separate reply, entitled "Short Strictures on the Rev. Dr. Priestly's Letters to a Young Man, concerning Mr. Wakefield's Treatise on Public Worship," taking for his

Of a writer, whose reputation is so well established as that of Gilbert Wakefield, it is proper to speak with some degree of caution; but this is a plain and scriptural question, and I do not hesitate to say that his "*Inquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public or Social Worship*," must have excited attention, by the literary reputation of its author, and the occasional acuteness of its remarks, (aided indeed by, substantially, a good cause) rather than by any solid knowledge which it displays of the bearings or the details of its subject. The views, indeed, of this able controversialist were, for the most part, correct and enlightened, and many of his points supported by unanswerable arguments; but he would appear not to have himself sufficiently studied the present subject to be consistent throughout, and by some injudicious concessions which he made on the one hand, and some untenable positions into which he was driven on the other, he gave his opponents a superiority of which they did not fail to take advantage.*

The question, therefore, may be well considered as still an open one. I wish to inquire concerning it, with fairness and true candour, but without the affectation of either. In itself the discussion lies within a small compass; but existing prejudices, and the arguments and authorities which are adduced in its support, render necessary no inconsiderable degree of detail, and some portion, perhaps, of prolixity. Those who value truth will be prepared, however, to follow me through the former, and on so important and interesting a subject, even to bear, in some degree, with the latter.

motto "*This our craft is in danger of being set at nought.*"—Acts xix, 27. He published also "*A General Reply to the Arguments against the Inquiry into Public Worship.*"—By the Author of that Inquiry.—London 1792."

* As an instance of the former of these, take his concession—that public social worship (and it has been assumed that he thereby meant public social prayer) did form a part of the Mosaic dispensation. In his *first* edition, indeed, he said "I find no circumstances in the scriptures concerning this people—the Hebrews—that wear any aspect of public worship as we conduct it;" but in his *second* edition, too easily convinced by the bold assertions and really superficial arguments of his opponents, he avowed himself to have been mistaken on this point. A remarkable example of his having taken up positions which were untenable, occurs in his hypothesis—that Christianity was an *improving* system, and that, even if social prayer had been practised by Jesus and his disciples, it was in accordance with the ignorance of that age, and not binding on after times. A position, the weakness and pernicious consequences of which, were fully shewn by Pope and others, in reply.

Let us first ascertain, critically and exactly, what is the subject in dispute; a question fairly stated, being, in fact, half answered. *Prayer*, then, may be of various kinds, but the chief division is that into—I. *Private*: II. *Public* Prayer.

For the first of these (*private* prayer) it must, from its nature, be *individual*: for the second (*public* prayer) it may be divided into—first, *individual*; second, *social*.

Public *individual* prayer may take place in two ways, thus: either one man may pray in the presence of others, who are themselves *not* praying—such was the prayer of the pharisees in the market places, and at the corners of the streets; or, several persons, met in one place, may *each* offer up his *separate* prayer—as was the practice in the courts of the Jewish temple, and as is alluded to in various parts, both of the Old and New Testament.

Public *social* prayer is the joint or common prayer, or form of prayer, of many assembled individuals. In substance it can be of one kind only, though it is practised in two ways—I. By a set and pre-concerted form of words, delivered by one man, in the plural number, and in which the rest express their intention of joining, by—1st, audibly accompanying the words throughout: 2d, occasional responses; 3d, the use of the final phrase, Amen. II. In an extemporaneous form, one man using words, also in the plural number, which have *not* been previously agreed upon and established, but to the use of which, either tacitly or audibly, the persons present give their assent, professing to make the prayer their own.

We have here then four species or modes of prayer:—

1. Private individual.
2. Public individual of one person.
3. ————— of more than one person.
4. Public social—either with or without set forms.*

* This division, which is very important to the argument, may to some appear yet clearer, if put in the form of a table, thus:—

| | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| PRAYER may be | I. PRIVATE | | <i>Individual</i> , or (1) The prayer of the closet. | |
| | II. PUBLIC | (a) <i>Individual</i> | (2) By one in the presence of others who are not praying. | { |
| | | | (3) By several, each praying separately, though in the same place. | |
| | | (b) <i>Social</i> | (4) Either by a liturgy, or extemporaneously, one man praying as the organ of the assembly. | } |

It may be here observed, with regard to singing, that (*so far as the psalms*

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It is respecting the *last* of these four classes of prayer that I purpose inquiring. Wishing to free the subject from a common source of ambiguity, I must request the careful attention of the reader to the above classification of the modes of prayer, in order that it may be distinctly understood what it is I *do*, and what it is I *do not*, seek to disprove and overthrow. Not only the words *worship* and *prayer*—(the latter of which we have seen is not synonymous with, but only one species of the former) not only these words have, in this controversy, been frequently, by writers upon it, confounded with each other, but the terms *prayer*, *public prayer*, *public individual prayer*, and *public social prayer*, in the course of the argument, have been frequently, and I believe I may say, in some instances, skilfully substituted the one for the other; the defenders of *social prayer* thus claiming for their cause all the arguments which may be used in favour of *prayer* abstractedly, and gaining, at least, a temporary triumph over their opponents, by causing it to be believed, whilst these were attacking *social prayer* only, that, in fact, they were opposing the practice of *prayer* itself.

To protect myself from this danger then, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I *do not* direct my arguments against the *first* class—the *private* and *individual* prayer of the closet; regarding it, on the contrary, to the member of the Christian church, who, as such, has received *permission* to pray, as one of the highest of privileges and advantages. Further, as not being practices of the present day, I *do not* direct my arguments against either the *second* or *third* classes—that is, *public prayer individually* performed, whether by one man, or by a few, or a whole assembled multitude. Though it will be incidentally shewn, in the course of the argument, that, although special circumstances, which we shall have to explain as we pass on in our scriptural inquiries, produced these practices in an early and unenlightened age, and with a view to particular objects;

(*or hymns contain prayer or petition*.) that practice stands upon precisely the same ground as any other kind of prayer. I have deemed it unnecessary to mention, on every occasion, singing in connection with prayer; but they must evidently, as religious ordinances, stand or fall together. Singing, however, generally consists, *not* of prayer, and *even* when it does so, not of *social* prayer, but of *individual* praise or thanksgiving; though *even* this, from the lips of those frequently who use it, is an unauthorized practice, and objectionable on other grounds. It may prevent confusion in the argument, if religious singing, as now practised in our churches and chapels, should receive a separate notice—it need be but a brief one.

yet, that, as Christian ordinances, they are now wholly without authority of scripture, and unsupported by the principles of Christianity. This species of prayer, indeed, as already observed, is neither practised, nor specifically defended in the present day, though often, in argument, confounded with the class which follows. The remaining mode of prayer then, namely, the *fourth*, or *public social* prayer, with or without set forms, is that against which (as it is the common practice of the present day) my arguments must be considered as directed. To *this* I object that it is irrational and anti-scriptural—and I hold myself prepared to prove it both.

In a few words then, the specific practice which I now oppose as irrational and anti-christian, is—*public* prayer, conducted in a *social* manner; which stands opposed, at once to *private* prayer, and to *public* prayer conducted in an *individual* manner. Prayer, *as performed in the churches and chapels of the present day*, might perhaps, without impropriety, be taken as our definition; or we should not object to adopt the description given by Mr. Moore, (*Inquiry*, p. 120) and say—that we are arguing against *that* which he professes to defend, namely, “*SOCIAL PRAYER IN THE MANNER NOW IN USE; that is, of one individual delivering the prayer in the name of all, and the congregation signifying their participation and concurrence by the response—Amen.*” I am only anxious to adopt such a precise definition of the subject as shall avoid ambiguity, and put the reader exactly in possession of my object.

A word or two as to the *nature* of public social prayer, may here also be necessary. It is essentially, as, indeed, its name imports, *the joint and united prayer of all the persons present*. It is not that all the parties pray, each for himself, but that they pray collectively and as a body. It is not that one man, the priest, or officiating minister, himself, individually, prays for, or in the name of all; but he is considered as the representative and organ, or mouth-piece of the whole, and they all speak, as with one united voice, in him. It is a real, or an intended *chorus* of prayer, all joining in the same petition, at one identical moment, and all expressing that petition in one common form of words, which equally professes to give the thoughts and petitions of each and all, whether pre-composed or extemporaneous—whether one voice only be audible, or all join aloud in the same sensible sounds.

To the practice of praying *publicly* and *socially* these are,

on the ground of reason, the strongest, and I really think, the most unanswerable objections. Intending first to take a *scriptural* review of the subject, I shall, in this place, advert but briefly to the question of its rationality, but one or two previous remarks are indispensable. Generally speaking, that is, on common and stated occasions, and except in such peculiar cases as have been already noticed, to seek a *public* opportunity of praying appears to me unnecessary, absurd, and irrational. Publicity in prayer is unnecessary—for that Being to whom prayer is addressed can see and hear as well in private: it is absurd and irrational—for, if I know any thing of the nature of prayer, publicity is calculated rather to disturb or injure—to prevent or counteract its exercise. If there be one thing more than another which appears to require thought, abstraction, *loneliness*—if I may so apply the word—it is prayer to God. We should be absent, not only from the world, but from the thoughts of the world—not only from other men, but almost from ourselves. The position that *privacy* is, generally speaking, desirable, almost essential to prayer, is so plain and self-evident to me, that I confess I want words to express my astonishment at the prevalence of the practice of *public* prayer. Yet the absurdity is now increased a hundred fold, when men, not content with praying *publicly*, attempt and profess to pray *socially*. *Attempt and profess*, I say, for really to do the thing is beyond their power. They are driven to the awkward expedient of pre-composed forms, or to the poor evasion of setting up one man as the organ and mouth-piece of the rest; but, till the thoughts of the heart can be *composed*, like words in a printing-press, and the feelings of men attuned like musical instruments, which vibrate in common at the same moment, and to one sound—till this be done, it is vain and deceptive to attempt and profess that which is commonly called public social prayer. If *public* prayer be an absurdity, *social* prayer, on common and set occasions, I do not hesitate to pronounce a moral impossibility. Social prayer then *not* being that rational thing, so proper in itself and so natural to man, which some of its defenders have been anxious to represent it, it follows that there is but one other ground on which its practice can be enjoined, or even justified, in the present day, as an ordinance binding on Christians; and that other ground I need scarcely say is—scripture authority. Prayer itself—even *individual* prayer—man can have no right to suppose acceptable to Deity, except by his having given, through

revelation, a command, or a permission, that it should be offered up. But *public social prayer*—that men should meet in a regular manner, at stated times, with a priest or minister to officiate—prayer thus become a public rite—a social institution—a religious ceremony, in fact—for *this we must, of course, look for the express command and direction of Deity, through some of his authorized messengers. The authority of man will not hold good in this case.* The Christian, at any rate, above all men, should refuse to practise, and cease to respect that as a part of the religion he professes, *which has never been instituted, ordained or commanded, either by the founder of his faith, or the apostles employed to establish the Christian church throughout the world.*

The indispensable necessity of giving a religious and scriptural authority for the practice of *social prayer*; has been felt by its advocates; they make, accordingly, as they appear to think, a triumphant appeal to the Old and New Testament on the subject. There, in almost every page of these writings, and but the more strongly confirmed under every succeeding dispensation, the advocates of public social prayer profess to find their favourite practice.

“Public Worship,” (says Mr. Pope, p. 86, and from the context we collect that, by this expression, he means *public social prayer*) is a duty which has its foundation in human nature, and constitutes a most important part of universal religion. It was observed and recommended under the Mosaic dispensation; by Jesus Christ it was still more strongly recommended, and acquired new obligation; his apostles, in imitation of their divine master, made it their business to prosecute and extend the same as an indispensable principle.”

Let us hear, on this same view of the subject, the language of Mr. Thomas Moore.

“Among the patriarchs and Jews, especially in the latter periods of their history, prayer and praises accompanied their sacrifices, and regularly formed a part of their social and public religious services.” (Inquiry, P. 30.)

Again:—

“This duty” (that of public worship, put for public prayer) “has the sanction of antiquity, as well as of all modern practice among Christians. The Hebrews, from the infancy of their nation, were accustomed to it. Prayer” (quere—*public social prayer*?) “was a companion of sacrifice. It formed a part of their worship in the temple, the whole of which was public and social. From the temple it was transferred to the synagogue, where, as there was no sacrifice, it formed the chief part of their religious services, and was offered in a form the most social that could be devised. These services Christ himself, and his apostles, regularly attended, and by this means, at least, expressed their approbation of social worship, in some form or other, leaving the use of liturgies, or free prayer, to the discretion

and judgment of the worshipper. Besides this, instances are mentioned in the gospels, in which Christ, on other occasions, prayed in society; and there are some in which his approbation of this custom is implied. Various passages have also been quoted, which prove that social prayer was the common and habitual practice of the apostles, and first Christians in general; and from the unexceptionable testimony of the earliest *and most respectable* writers, immediately succeeding the apostolic age, it is almost indisputable that, in their time, this custom universally prevailed in the Christian churches. The manner in which it was conducted bore a striking resemblance to that of the synagogue, *which shews its origin to have been from thence*. From that time to this, it has continued to be the uniform practice of Christians of all parties, however opposite, in other instances, their opinions, and whatever may have been their animosities. It has, therefore, *the clear sanction of the religion we profess*, not less than of reason. It has grown with the growth of Christianity—has accompanied, with equal steps, its progress through the civilized world; and so long as *this pure and benevolent system of faith and practice* shall retain its hold on the minds of mankind, we have no fear of its decline." (P. 146.)

Mr. Moore is a Protestant, a Dissenter, and a Unitarian, and has he yet to learn that "*the pure and benevolent system of faith and practice*," called Christian, has been deformed and corrupted, by the addition of creeds which it never taught, and the imposition of practices which it never sanctioned? Amongst the latter of these, and not the least prominent, or the least pernicious of them, stands the practice of *public social* prayer. The authority of scripture, and the various dispensations of the revealed will of God, to which Mr. Moore and others so confidently appeal, will, I think, upon investigation, be found to fail them. I speak not this unadvisedly, or without due consideration. Before I sat down to write on this subject I not only read every work I could meet with, which had been written *in defence* of the practice, but I carefully perused all the books, both of the Old and New Testament, with an express view to this particular inquiry; and I have now lying before me, as the result of that perusal, a transcript of nearly 500 passages, copied at length, being all which appeared to me, directly or indirectly, to bear upon the question of religious worship. With these before me I feel confident in putting a negative upon nearly all the above positions of Mr. Moore. Of *public social* prayer it shall be my business to prove that we have no evidence whatever that it "accompanied the sacrifices" of the patriarchs—that "the Hebrews, from the infancy of their nation," were *not* accustomed to it; that it formed *no* part of the temple service; and, consequently, could *not* have been transferred thence to the synagogue; that Jesus did *not* "express his approbation of it," by attending such services; that

instances are *not* "mentioned in the gospels," in which Jesus practised or expressed his approbation of this institution; and, finally, that various passages can *not* be quoted, "which prove that social prayer was the common and habitual practice of the apostles and first Christians in general."

When I shall have established these negatives, by reference to the scriptures, it will be felt as of little importance to the Christian, that the practice in question "*had its origin in the Jewish synagogue*," that it comes recommended by the testimony of those "*fathers*," whom Mr. Moore terms—"the earliest and most respectable writers immediately succeeding the apostolic age;" or, as he elsewhere explicitly states, that it has universally prevailed among parties of every "name or denomination, whatever form of church government, and religious discipline, they may have adopted, or whatever system of doctrine they may have received as true; whether Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, or Baptists; whether Trinitarians, or Unitarians; Arians, Socinians, Lutherans, or Calvinists."

For this long and perplexing list of authorities, I confess that I feel but a very trifling degree, either of deference or respect. The laws of God, as revealed in the earliest ages—the commands of Jesus—and the authority of his apostles, in later times, these are, I confess, to me, of greater importance than them all.

For the sake of clearness, whilst taking a scriptural view of the subject, and in order, in some degree, to systematize so extensive an investigation, I shall now state, in the form of questions, or inquiries, the several points to which, in the remainder of this, and in the succeeding Essays, I wish to call the attention of the reader.

1. Was *public social prayer* (being the fourth species of the preceding classification) commanded by Deity at the creation of man, or at any time throughout the patriarchal ages?

2. If not so, was it then practised *without* such command?

3. Was it instituted by Moses, or was it afterwards, by divine direction, introduced into the tabernacle or the temple worship?

4. Was it, *without* such direction, practised by the Jewish people, in their synagogues, or elsewhere?

5. If the practice had been commanded under the Mosaic dispensation, would it have, *therefore*, been imperative upon Christians?

6. Had it been practised by the Jews, in their synagogues,

or elsewhere, *without* divine authority, would it *then* have been imperative upon Christians?

7. Was it instituted by Jesus or his apostles, as a part of Christianity?

8. If not so instituted, was the practice sanctioned by their example, or by that of the churches which they instituted?

9. Is it so consistent with the nature of things, or so agreeable to the spirit and general principles of Christianity, as to render it probable that it was adopted, by the early Christians, as a matter of course, without the necessity of a divine appointment?

10. If sanctioned neither by the command nor the example of Jesus and his apostles—if neither consistent with the nature of things, nor agreeable to the spirit of Christianity, in what way did it come to be considered—as it now is considered—a part of Christian worship?

The proof of these points it should rather be for the supporters of the practice to establish. To prove a negative is, at all times, confessedly difficult; yet I shall have little doubt of being able to establish negatives in reply to the above inquiries. In that case, one only other question—the following—will remain:—

11. If public social prayer was instituted neither during the patriarchal ages, nor under the Mosaic dispensation, nor in the Christian church—if it was neither communicated to the Jews, by the previous practice of the patriarchs, nor to the first Christians by that of the Jews, nor to us by the example of Jesus and his apostles—in that case, on what other scriptural grounds is it meant that the practice should be defended as one now binding on the Christian—as sanctioned by Deity—or as desirable in its consequences to mankind?

It may assist in simplifying this inquiry, if I observe, in the way of concession, that, should the four first of the above questions, or either of them, be answered in the affirmative, (that is, if it should appear that *social* prayer *was* practised in the earlier ages—instituted by Moses—ordained in the temple—or joined in by Jesus—without objection being raised—in the synagogue) should this be made to appear, I am willing to allow that there would then be some ground for inferring that the practice *might*, without being expressly commanded, have been introduced into Christianity as a thing in itself reasonable, and which had already received the sanction of Deity. But if these pre-

vidas questions should be answered in the negative, (that is, if it should appear that *social* prayer was *not* practised in the earlier ages—in the Jewish temple—or in the synagogues—even the *individual* prayer practised in the latter places being censured by Jesus) it will *then* follow that *social* prayer, if used at all, must have been a *new* practice, peculiar to Christianity, and introduced by Jesus and his apostles; and, if it should further appear that this ceremony is *not* so consistent with the nature of things, or so agreeable to the spirit and general principles of Christianity as to render it probable that it was adopted by the early Christians as a matter of course—it will, in that case, be required that we should find in its favour the *express and positive command*, either of Jesus or his apostles, for its due performance, and stated observance, in the Christian church. We shall then have to inquire if, in the pages of the New Testament, the defenders of the practice of *social* prayer are enabled to point to such an *express and positive command*. In other words—to call upon them to produce the *institution* of the ceremony called *public social prayer*.

Having stated the above questions as the ground of our future inquiries, I shall now proceed direct to the examination of the two first of them, namely: *Was public social prayer commanded by Deity, at the creation of man, or at any time throughout the patriarchal ages? And if not so, was it then practised without a command?*

The first remark, and it would appear to be a tolerably conclusive one, which occurs to me to make on this subject, is that, from the creation of Adam to the days of Moses, *we do not find recorded one single instance of public social prayer*. Mr. Moore, and other defenders of the practice, argue on this subject wholly from inference and surmise; they do not even *profess* to adduce an *express* instance of this kind, during the time in question.

At the creation of man, and in the case of Adam, no mention is made of prayer. Cain and Abel afford the first recorded instances of religious worship; their sacrifices are spoken of, but not their prayer. (Gen. iv. 3.) Their offerings, too, were different: Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, and Abel of the firstlings of his flock; their worship, therefore, was evidently not *social*—but *individual*.

After the birth of Enos, we are told (iv. 26) that “*men then began to call upon the name of the Lord.*” This, however, was not by means of *public social* prayer, for there is good authority for maintaining that the passage should be rendered—“*Then began men to be called BY the name of*

"the Lord; meaning, probably, that by that time the human intellect had sufficiently advanced to understand somewhat of the worship of Jehovah; or, intending to draw a distinction between the good and the evil; a distinction which, in a speedily succeeding passage, (vi. 2) would appear referred to in the antithesis of *"the sons of God"* and *"the daughters of men."* In support of which interpretation it may be observed that mention is afterwards made (Deut. xxvii. 18) of the Israelitish people, when in a state of obedience to the will of God, that then *"all the people of the earth should see that they were called by the name of the Lord, and that they were afraid of (or revered) him."* See also 2 Chron. vii. 24.

The flood, as it is emphatically called, succeeded; *"The wickedness of man was great upon the earth; the earth was filled with violence; every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually;"* immersed in worldly thoughts, or plunged in sensual pleasures, *"they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."* (Luke xvii. 27.) But amongst their sins, whether of omission or of commission, we nowhere find them charged either with the neglect, or the abuse, of public social prayer;—that practice, which is spoken of as a natural obligation, impressed, as it were, innately on the human mind, and of which, from the earliest times downward, we have seen such a parade of authorities.

Noah—escaped from the flood—expresses his gratitude by *"building an altar unto the Lord, and offering burnt offerings on the altar."* (viii. 20.) His offering is accepted. In the figurative language of the earlier ages, and the eastern world, it is said, as though the incense of the sacrifice of a virtuous man had power to ascend to heaven, that *"the Lord smelled a sweet savor."* Of prayer, however, nothing is said; the advocates of social prayer, therefore, can derive no authority from this instance of worship; yet, if their theory were a correct one, this surely (an occasion of signal and unexampled deliverance common to them all) was a time when Noah and his children, and his family, *should* have joined in social prayer!

A long interval succeeds, in which little more than the names of whole generations are recorded; an interval in which were laid, as it were, the foundations of society; an interval of ignorance and confusion—probably of violence and crime; in which, as colonization extended itself, and the herds of mankind covered a larger portion of the earth,

what little knowledge of their Maker they carried with them became more faint; and what few ideas they had imbibed of religious worship became gradually corrupted. They *had* ideas, however, of the existence of God, and of the worship which he had permitted, if not commanded, to their earliest forefathers. The one God they multiplied into many; to these they gave various, and mostly bad, attributes; and the *worship* of such gods necessarily became marked by cruelty, depravity, and licentiousness. What were, at first, families of men, became, in after ages, the nations which peopled and divided the earth; their superstitions grew with their power and their numbers; their worship became "*an abomination*" in the eyes of God—too pure to behold evil with approbation. Though, once, they had known God, "*they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and to creeping things; changing the truth of God into a lie, and worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator; who, of a truth, is blessed for ever.*" To counteract, and ultimately to destroy, this growing, but, no doubt, necessary evil, the Deity appears, in his wisdom, to have selected, at first, individuals, and afterwards a nation, whom (as far as from their knowledge and capacity, they were capable of becoming so) he made his instruments in preserving and diffusing the most valuable and important truths—his greatest and his choicest blessings. The knowledge of one God was not communicated, or his worship commanded, to man, for the benefit of Deity, or even, perhaps, because these things were valuable in themselves; but they were means to an end, and that end was the happiness of man, by developing his intellect, and gradually exalting him to mental excellence and virtue. The knowledge of the existence of one God, by itself, abstractedly, could be of no importance; but it was TRUTH, and therefore valuable; it was the clue to all other truths, and therefore beyond all price. It is by ever keeping in view the *object* which the Deity must have entertained, in revealing his existence to his creatures, that we are enabled to explain what would otherwise be an anomaly, and a difficulty, in the history of early religious worship. God being, by his nature, always the same, why (it has been asked) were the forms of religious worship

permitted to be accommodated to the infancy, or the ignorance, of the human mind? Because, I would say, in reply, though God has remained the same, man has been a progressive being; because the forms of religious worship, and even religious worship itself, are, of themselves, nothing; and the effect produced on the human mind, and the operation of these causes on the human character, are, and have been, every thing. We must return, however, to the detail, from which, though not perhaps unprofitably, we have digressed.

Abraham was one of the earliest, and one of the most distinguished of the individuals referred to, as favoured with communications from Deity; a promise is made to him that, in after ages, the land of Canaan shall be given to his posterity. Wherever he pitched his tent, for any time, he appears to have erected an altar, and “*to have called on the name of the Lord;*” or to have been called *by* the name of the Lord, that is, recognized as his worshipper in opposition to the idolatry of the age. (Gen. xii. 7, 8; xiii. 18.) Even if by this latter phrase (called upon the name of the Lord) it should be established that prayer is meant, by what possible construction it can be made, as by commentators it has been made, to support *public social* prayer, I am wholly at a loss to conjecture. Yet Mr. Moore speaks confidently of the worship of Abraham, as of this description. “Where—ever Abraham” (he observes, p. 31) “resided, there he “erected an altar, and there he *statedly* called upon the “name of the Lord; prayer, *as just observed*, being a regular “appendage of the sacrifice, and properly constituting the “worship.” *As just observed*, let it be here remarked, means as just observed by Mr. Moore himself; we shall find no such *observation* made in the scriptures—the only valid authority on the subject. That prayer was, particularly in this age, “a *regular appendage*” of sacrifice, we have *no* evidence whatever. That such prayer, when it *did* accompany sacrifice, was, as above asserted, *social* and *stated*, remains equally unproved, and is yet more improbable. At any rate the mere *assertion* of the fact, by a controversialist, at this time, will go little towards its establishment. Of the prayer of Abraham, so far from having evidence that it was social, we have actually *no direct instance on record*; though, from the piety of his character, and from his being favoured with direct communications with Deity, and immediate intercourse with his messengers, there can be little doubt but that he was habitually in the practice of individual prayer.

The language of Abraham to the young men—"Abide ye here, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you," (Gen. xxii. 5) has also been adduced in this controversy. "These expressions" (observes Mr. Pope, *Divine Worship*, p. 26) "clearly shew that the united worship of more than one was a usage not uncommon in this age." The worship, however, here spoken of is sacrifice—not prayer. Many modes of worship, that is, of paying outward respect to the Deity, may have been publicly and socially performed, and this was the case perhaps, particularly of sacrifice; but it is of one species of social worship only, which we are now inquiring, namely *social prayer*; and it certainly does not appear, in the present case, that Abraham said—"I and the lad will go yonder and pray."

The circumstance of the servant sent by Abraham, to obtain a wife for his son Isaac, is remarkable, as containing, I believe, the first instance of prayer, properly so called, which is expressly recorded, or narrated at length, in the scriptures. His prayer, however, is *individual*! "And the servant made his camels to kneel down without the city, by a well of water, at the time of evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said O Lord God of my master Abraham, behold I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, let down thy pitcher, I pray thee that I may drink; and she shall say drink and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewn kindness unto my master." (Gen. xxiv. 11 to 14.)

This, it will be seen, is petition—prayer—individual prayer—in the strictest sense of the words. In the same individual we have, afterwards, an instance of worship and thanksgiving; the essential distinction between which, and prayer, or petition, it may be well hereafter to bear in mind. When the object of his prayer is likely to be granted, (v. 26.) "The man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord; and he said blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master, of his mercy and truth."

The return of the servant with Rebecca, the betrothed wife of his master, introduces us to the prayer of the patriarch Isaac. Was that prayer social? Let us hear the testimony. "And Isaac went out to meditate," (to pray, is

the supposed more correct marginal reading) "*to pray in the field, at the eventide, and he lift up his eyes and saw and beheld the camels were coming.*" (Gen. xxiv. 63.) The only other instance recorded of the prayer of Isaac, was also, like this, strictly individual. He is described as "*entreating the Lord,*" and his prayer is—that he may be blessed with offspring. (xxv. 21.) These cases will well illustrate the kind of prayer used by the patriarch Isaac; with him God is described as renewing the covenant made with Abraham, saying "*I am the God of Abraham, thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake; and Isaac builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord,*" (or was called by the name of the Lord) "*and pitched his tent there.*" (xxvi. 24.)

The instances recorded of the worship of Jacob, are more numerous than those of any other of the patriarchs; and they throw considerable light upon the religious worship of that age. "*Jacob,*" we are told, (xxviii. 18) "*vowed a vow, saying, if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I may come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house, and all that thou shalt give me I will surely give a tenth to thee.*" We here see what, in that age, was the extent of the human intellect, on the subject of worship; even a covenant with the Almighty was made conditional, upon his giving the worshipper food and raiment; and his devotion was exemplified (not by public social prayer) but by a sacrifice of the tenth part of his possessions.

After the treaty, or covenant, between Jacob and Laban, "*Jacob offered sacrifice*" (or, as the margin renders it, "*killed beasts*") "*upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread.*" (xxxii. 54.) This, though evidently social, was a feast, rather than a sacrifice, though it is difficult for us to draw the distinction, and it is probable, in those days, that the one frequently accompanied the other. Instances, in which Jacob built altars, and offered sacrifices, occur Gen. xxxiii. 18 and xli. 18; but we have on record only one instance of his praying, and that will tend but little to support the position—that he practised, and set the example of, social prayer. This instance occurs Gen. xxxii. 6, and is recorded in the following words: "*And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and*

"also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him; and Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed," He proceeds immediately to divide the people into two bands—for public social prayer doubtless; no! for he said "If Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape." After taking this prudent precaution he seeks God in prayer, but it is individual, not social prayer, for "Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return into thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me and the mother with the children." This was an instance of common danger, which, of all others, might, in the way of exception, have called for, and justified, a common prayer; yet the prayer of the patriarch is strictly individual, and such, as in every other instance, was the recorded prayer of the age in which he lived.

We have now, indeed, adverted to, I believe, *all* the instances of prayer in particular, or worship in general, spoken of in the book of Genesis, previous to the mission of Moses to the enslaved Israelites. Is there *one single case* in which this prayer is spoken of as, at once, *public and social*? Surely every impartial reader will reply with me—**NOT ONE.**

Of the existence of social prayer in these ages there is, indeed, no evidence whatever; it is neither commanded—nor practised—nor is there any censure directed against either its neglect or its abuse. The advocates of ~~the~~ doctrines appear to have *felt* this omission, for they say nothing of *direct* proof; yet they endeavour, *by inference*, to establish the practice as one existing even in these ages. To *inference* so important a practice clearly should not be left; but, in order to leave nothing unreplicated to, I think it may be briefly shewn that even these inferences are unfounded, and not supported by the premises from which they are professed to be drawn.

"Among the patriarchs and Jews," (observes Mr. Moure) "especially in the latter periods of their history, prayer and praises accompanied their sacrifices, and regularly formed a part of their *social* and public religious services. The principal signification of divine worship, adopted by general consent, is prayer; and that this is a signification of that expression, whether it relate to acts of public or private devotion, which frequently occurs in scripture, is unquestionable." (P. 3.) "Wherever Abraham resided there

he erected an altar, and there he **STATEDLY** '*called upon the name of the Lord*,' prayer, as just observed, being a regular appendage of the sacrifice, and properly constituting the worship."

After quoting the further examples of Isaac and Jacob, (of whom, however, we have seen that no instance whatever, of their praying *socially* is recorded) Mr. Moore adds—

"Now it is evident, from the circumstances of the case, that these altars were not places of solitary worship only. Did these pious patriarchs suffer their families, and numerous dependents, to live in total neglect of religion, and its public duties? Certainly not." (*But the question is—did they teach them to pray SOCIALLY?*) "On the contrary it is mentioned as an honourable trait in Abraham's character, that he would take the necessary care that his children, and his household, should follow his own example of religious fidelity. These altars, then, were the places where the patriarchs worshipped God by prayer and sacrifice; not alone, but in company with the families, or tribes, of which they were the heads. They were the **PRIESTS**, as well as the rulers, of their households."

The chief objection which occurs to me, against the above, is—not merely that it is assertion, or inference, *without* evidence, but that, as far as it is intended to maintain that the patriarchs used *public social* prayer, it is assertion, or inference, *contrary* to evidence. The reader may turn back, and in the few preceding pages he will find quoted, I believe, *every* instance of prayer recorded, in these ages, in the Old Testament. Is there *one* in which the prayer described, is *public and social* prayer? Yet Mr. Moore, and other advocates of the doctrine, profess to find proof of it every where. Abraham, they say, practised it; and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs. Prayer was not only *public* and *social*, but it was "*stated*," and (here perhaps is the clue to the whole) they then, too, Mr. Moore has discovered, had **PRIESTS** to administer it!

Whether or not the sacrifices of the patriarchs were *socially* performed—and always, or even frequently, accompanied by prayer, are questions which we need not now agitate at any length, because they are only indirectly connected with our subject—that of social prayer. The sacrifices of the patriarchs were probably, as asserted, made by them, at once on their own part, and that of their family or tribe. The confined views of these ages, on the subject of religious worship, as exemplified in the case of the patriarch Jacob, we have already seen. It is even recorded of Job that he offered sacrifice in expiation of the *possible* sins of his *absent* children. These were practices natural, perhaps, to a primitive and uninformed age; but which revelation and reason, by shewing man that religion is

wholly a personal matter, have since exploded. From the little mention made of prayer in the early history of man, it is probable that even private prayer was, in few cases, if at all, in common use. Prayer is—or should be—an intellectual, not a formal, practice; and was probably, in this age, altogether confined to the good and the most intelligent. In this sense the assertion made—that the patriarchs not only prayed for themselves, but interceded for their families, may be well founded. But this is not *social* prayer “*in the manner now in use,*” and respecting which alone we are inquiring. The joint and united prayer of a multitude, and the personal intercession of an individual in his own name, for his family or others, are essentially distinct things. There is, between them, all the difference between *social* and *individual* prayer. That the prayer which may have accompanied sacrifice was social we have no evidence whatever. Sacrifice was an external act, or ceremonial, definite in its nature—for a certain, avowed, and common object; and even if *that* were social, as it necessarily was public, it by no means follows that prayer, which is an internal act of the heart and of the mind, and the form and purport of which must vary in each individual, should also have been public, and still less that it should have been social. Sacrifice may have been accompanied by prayer of the second or third class, though, for a reason given above, prayer could but rarely have been offered at all; but we have neither reason nor scripture to induce us to believe that it was accompanied by prayer of the fourth description—that is, by *social* prayer.

Though not called upon, in fairness of argument, to establish a negative, I cannot but think that, as far as we have gone, one has successfully been proved in this case. We find on record no instance of the practice;—no command from God for its observance; it is nowhere then spoken of (as by its defenders in our days) as a duty which ought to be performed; no censures are levelled against its neglect; no abuses are pointed out in its administration; cases occur in which, if a practice at all, it would have been practised, yet nothing is said on the subject; other modes of worship are frequently mentioned, yet the writer of the book of Genesis is wholly silent upon this. What are we to infer? Surely, from all these circumstances, we are justified in putting a decided negative upon the two questions we are now considering; and may safely assert—*That public social prayer was not commanded by Deity, at the creation of man, or at any time*

throughout the patriarchal ages; and further—that it was ~~not~~ then practised even without such a command. But even supposing that public social prayer had been expressly enjoined, and constantly practised in the patriarchal ages—of what importance would that have been to us, as Christians, and in the present day? Sacrifice was constantly performed by them, yet we never offer up sacrifice! Is it to an early, to an ignorant age—to an infantine state of society, that we should turn for our ideas of religion, and for our religious practices? Certainly not. Yet even this early, this ignorant age—which shews us man, in the most immature state of his intellect, does not present us with the irrational and absurd practice of public social prayer. For the present I leave the subject, and shall, in the next Essay, begin with the Mosaic dispensation, proposing to take a view of the worship of the Jews, in the earlier period of their history; and then to discuss the third question proposed for examination, namely, “*Was public social prayer instituted by Moses, or was it afterwards, by divine direction, introduced into the tabernacle or temple worship?*”

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND ITS INTERNAL DISCIPLINE.

(EXTRACT FROM A CHURCH REPORT.)

The following Extract from our church book, is given with the view of affording to the reader an insight into the INTERNAL DISCIPLINE of our Body. This, in our judgment, is a subject of first importance in Christianity; but the DISCIPLINE of the church can only be maintained where its UNITY is established as a first principle; and from the absence of that principle, proceeds the general—the almost total neglect of CHURCH DISCIPLINE among the professors of Christianity;—a neglect which is the more to be deplored, as it would seem to proceed in the ratio of their advance in rational views of religion. But it has been our constant endeavour, by calling into action all those strong principles of union and strict modes of discipline laid down or alluded to in the New Testament, to excite and maintain in the

church of God, the closest degree of fellowship, and of attention to moral improvement and mutual edification. With a view to these objects, many regulations have been adopted which it is unnecessary that we should here enlarge upon. Suffice it that the different branches of the church, in town and country, are in the habit of interchanging regular Reports of all their proceedings, and of corresponding with each other on all matters connected with our principles and our progress;—that we hold meetings, separate from the world, and in addition to the public teaching of our appointed speakers, both on Sundays and on other days, for the improvement and mutual edification of the church—both as a body, and (in the London branch where the number is greater) separately in classes; and that the Presidents of such Classes report quarterly to the Elder for the time being; the latter, on his going out of office, making a general Report to the church, relative to its moral state and progress during his eldership, the time of which is limited to three months. It is an Extract from one of these latter Reports that is now submitted to the reader.

We take this opportunity of saying, should these pages meet the eyes of any body of men, or number of individuals, who are anxious to inquire into and to adopt that system of church government, which, upon inquiry, shall appear most conformable to the pattern of the primitive church, as exhibited in the New Testament, we shall be happy to hear from such, and to hold out to them, if requested, the right hand of fellowship. Proselytes, we, unlike many religious parties, do not anxiously require; for religion is not with us a matter of profit, and of trade; but we are always rejoiced to meet with men of honest minds and inquiring habits, disposed to enter with us into the bonds of Christian fellowship. To such, we say—Pure religion, and membership with the church of God, are advantages the highest which this world can afford; you must obtain them, therefore, from your own heart-felt wishes—not at our solicitation. And if there be any who theoretically approve of these principles, but who, in practice, neglect them, on the plea either of personal convenience, or of supposed general expediency—of these we can only remark that, sinning wilfully against the commands of God, their error is only aggravated by their enlightenment, and their condemnation increased by their knowledge.

Note.—Letters on this subject would always reach the Elder of the Church, if addressed to the Editor of this Work, at the Printer's, No. 13, Kingsgate Street, Holborn, London.

*Report of the Elder to the Church, on the state of the Classes,
as reported to him by their Presidents.*

“ON a careful review of the different Reports, I am happy in finding that there is a general tendency to improvement, and that the study of the New Testament, in place of given subjects of discussion, is well spoken of, and its advantage appreciated. This, in my opinion, is a valuable improvement; as, in the first place, our religious principles being in themselves so reasonable and capable of proof, and the truth of them so firmly established in our minds, independent of the authority of scripture, it had insensibly, with some, led to the neglect of the study of the scriptures; a thorough acquaintance with which can *alone* make us wise unto salvation, and furnish us with motives sufficiently powerful to fit and prepare us for a state of eternal felicity;—and, secondly, while the latter practice is calculated to make us studious and diligent, as well as humble inquirers; the former—that of speaking on given subjects—which, in many instances, depends merely on a volubility of speech, is too apt to puff up and fill the mind with vanity and conceit. I therefore most highly approve of, and strongly recommend the continuance of the present practice. I observe, with pleasure, that the monthly *tea meetings* of the classes are generally well attended; and the advantage resulting therefrom most highly spoken of. It had always been matter of regret to my mind, that they had formerly been so much neglected. They are capable of producing the most valuable effects, if conducted with delicacy and faithfulness, as they serve to produce a greater intimacy, and draw together more powerfully the cords of brotherly affection: great care should be taken that they do not dwindle into mere gossiping meetings, or mere party associations; but that it be constantly kept in mind that their grand object is to promote the moral improvement of *each* individual—but, *above all*, the general improvement of the whole body, of which they would do well ever to keep in mind that they form a part only.

“I am sorry—it gives me pain—to observe that some of our members are not so deeply impressed with the high privileges to which they are *called*, as they ought to be; that their attendance at the class meetings is very defective; whilst there are some who, though they do attend, make little improvement, and content themselves with idle and unsatisfactory excuses for their neglect.”

The Report, after alluding to an instance of individual aberration of character, thus proceeds:—

“Painful as it must be to the church, to hear this account of some of its members, it cannot but be truly gratified to find that there are others whose improvement in knowledge and virtue, and whose prospects of future usefulness the Reports mention in very high terms. Our Brother — is, by the president of his class, most highly commended; not only for the improvement of his character and talents, but the great zeal manifested by him for the interest of the church; and having, when I disapproved of his conduct, expressed, in very strong terms, that disapprobation, I here take great pleasure in saying that the Report which speaks thus favourably of him, gives me the greatest gratification—as it must do the whole church—and that I have myself witnessed all that has been thus favourably expressed concerning him; and it is my sincere wish that he may persevere to the end, as I conceive it will be highly to the benefit and happiness of himself and family; while, from his great talents, sound mind, and discriminating judgment, the church cannot fail to derive great advantages; especially if his teaching be seconded by his example, which I feel a strong hope will be the case. The testimony borne to the improved character of our Brother —, is highly to his honour; and I trust that every day’s experience will prove to him more powerfully, the advantage and honour of being a member of the family of God; and that to be a door-keeper in that house is more honourable than to dwell in the palaces of the ungodly. Of two of our young friends, Brothers — and —, the Reports speak highly, as regards their improvement in talent, and their zealous and active employment of it for the benefit of the classes; as also for their excellent characters, and the strong expectations, thereby excited, that they will become burning and shining lights and patterns in the temple of the Most High God. May these glorious expectations be realized—and may they never become shipwrecked on the dangerous rocks of vanity and conceit! May they always look to the example of Jesus—who was humble, holy, and separate from sinners! May they be duly sensible of the high honour to which they are called;—walk worthy of their high vocation—in all purity and wisdom, and look only to the approbation of their own hearts, and of him who has, *in their youth*, called them most graciously out of darkness, into his most marvellous light! I am happy to add that there are more who are well spoken

of in the reports, but these being the most prominent, I have felt it my duty to name them in a particular manner, for their own encouragement and as examples to others. It is with pleasure I report that, on a survey of the whole, I am impressed with the belief that the church is more pure, and in its general features, more promising, than it has been for some years past. And now, Brethren, allow me to call to your memory the brief history I verbally gave you of our church, on my going out of office. The weakness, and apparent unfitness, of the instruments in its first establishment—the objects it has accomplished—and the difficulties and dangers it had to encounter—not only from the world, but from its own members;—some of whom, in the infancy of this church, and separating, as they did, with us, from a corrupt anti-christian church, proved disguised infidels; others interested hypocrites; others grossly immoral characters; some artful and designing men—all having their own ends to answer; and, last of all, and more recently, perhaps the most serious and dangerous trial the church has ever experienced from one who”—(*Here follows a late instance of dereliction from principle in a discarded member, the particulars of which are wholly unimportant to the public.*)

“Yet, in spite of all these difficulties, the church, through the divine blessing, exists, at this day, a monument of the divine wisdom and benevolence; by which it has accomplished such great objects, that were this church to cease to exist to-morrow, its principles would never be extinguished, but materials would be found, ready prepared, for men, more worthy and in happier times, to start from our goal with the greatest advantage, and enable them, with little comparative difficulty, to re-establish the church of God, and bless a benighted world, with its glorious light and truth. And now, my Brethren, while I call upon you, to join with me in gratitude to the Supreme Being for such exalted blessings, and for having accomplished such great things by such feeble instruments, “*because so it seemed good in his sight,*” and “*that if any gloried it should not be in man, but in God,*” let me also exhort you to remember that most of you have entered into the enjoyment of other men’s labours;—that these objects have been accomplished by other men’s hands, and that to you is given the advantages thereof; and, at the same time, the honour and responsibility of preserving, uncorrupted and uninjured, this most sacred deposit; which I trust you will preserve and maintain with more diligence and tenacity

than did the Jews of old the ark of the Most High God.— Thus honoured and blessed with a knowledge of the laws of the Christian church, let me exhort you as did Moses of old the children of Israel. (Deut. vii. 65.) “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; and these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine hearts, and thou shalt diligently teach them unto your children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou risest up;*” by so doing you will be the honoured instruments in preserving the church of God, and prove your gratitude to Him for raising you to so great an honour, as to be a worthy member of His family; you will promote your own happiness here, and become fitted for eternal happiness and usefulness in the life which is to come. May I, and all who are thus highly favoured, become more and more deeply impressed with a sense of the great and important privileges with which we are favoured. May we feel, indeed, that we are *the called of God*, and make it our constant study to *make our calling and election sure*, by an universal obedience to all the commands of our heavenly Father, and of his servant Jesus; thus *letting our light so shine before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven.*”

Signed by the Elder then retiring from office.

13th October, 1822.

THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD OPPOSED TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.—ESSAY III

IN the last Essay we finished the examination of that department of our subject which assumes that the mere fact of animal life, even in its lowest state of existence, requires the residence of an immaterial spirit; endeavouring to demonstrate that such a position involves its supporters in absurdities of so gross, and contradictions of so glaring a character, that without assumption, we might rest satisfied, that at least that part of our subject had been set at rest. We now proceed—in furtherance of our position “**THAT LIFE AND MIND ARE THE RESULT OF ORGANIZATION**”—to notice the more formidable, though equally fallacious, line of

defence, which rests upon the ground that, in the instance of man, his superior *intellect* renders an immaterial and immortal spirit indispensable. We shall, however, contenting ourselves with a few instances connected with his organization, endeavour to prove that the *mind* of man, in common with his *life*, is the result of organization only; and that no other cause than organization is discoverable, which can be esteemed equal to the production of such effects. And first, we take the phenomena connected with

THE BRAIN: because from it we can alone trace the manifestations of the mental faculties, which are said invariably to correspond with the degrees of its development. Thus the mind of the Negro, and the Hottentot, is found to be inferior to that of the European; and, upon examination, a cause is immediately observable for this singular fact. That cause is not that an inferior species of soul has taken up its abode in the Hottentot's tenement of clay, but that the organization of his brain is less perfect. Upon this principle it has been observed, that "The large cranium and high forehead, of the Ourang Outang, place him above other monkeys; but the developement of his brain, and his mental manifestations, are much below those of a Negro."

The confined degree of intellect in the idiot has been found to proceed from a mal-formation of the brain; whilst, among the brute tribes, the dog and the elephant are known to excel all other of the inferior animals, by possessing a more perfect cerebel structure. Here, then, we submit are causes, connected with organization, which prove at once adequate and rational, in accounting for the varieties in man, and in animals. But once withdraw this simple cause, and substitute spiritual agency, and we become involved in incomprehensible contradictions and absurdities.

The perfection of thinking (that mental process which the defender of a soul deems to be too elevated for organized matter) is also found to depend upon the growth and the sound state of the body—particularly of the brain.

The importance of these facts to the settlement of this controversy, is foreseen by Mr. Rennell; and he attempts to arrest their consequence, by asserting that the mind has attained to its full vigour, not at thirty, but at seven years of age, an odd assertion truly—but some parties write from their individual experience; and, therefore, modestly adopt the authority of the poet, in reasoning only from what they know.

“Cases” (says Mr. Rennell) “*daily* occur—where the strength is gone, the vital principle rapidly retreating, and the patient is lying helpless, hopeless, waiting for the very moment of impending dissolution; yet his mind shall be as vigorous, his judgment as sound, his imagination as ardent, as in the days of his health and strength; and even in the very convulsions of bodily death, the life of his understanding, and his affections shall be unimpaired.”

A cautious writer would not thus have put his hypothesis to the hazard, but of that qualification Mr. Rennell is certainly destitute; and while he is not a liberal, he is undoubtedly a very bold adversary; in some respects, indeed, such a one as we best approve of; for with him, as with ourselves, there are no half measures, no efforts to qualify the particular matter in dispute. The system is here carried out to its fullest extent, and we are prepared to go along with Mr. Rennell, and assert that, if man has an immaterial and immortal soul, then, indeed, the facts should be found exactly as stated above; their *constant*, not merely their *occasional* occurrence, we hold to be inseparable from a defence of that doctrine; assuming, as it does, that death releases the soul from its “prison house.” If *death*, indeed, be an advantage with regard to thinking, then *disease* ought to be a proportional advantage; and, generally, the nearer the body approaches to a state of dissolution, the freer and less embarrassed ought, and if there were a soul *would*, be the faculties of the mind. But we shall not stop here to shew how contrary this is to the settled laws of our being, as we are desirous of keeping firm hold of the Advocate’s conclusion, that cases *daily* occur, in which men, in the very convulsions of bodily death, preserve their minds, judgment, and imagination as sound and vigorous as in the days of their health and strength.

Such cases may occur, but not, we submit, “daily;” they are very rare and extraordinary instances;—the *exceptions*, in fact, *not the rule*; whilst, before this writer’s argument can have the slightest force, he must prove that they are not merely of “occasional,” but of constant, of universal occurrence; that, indeed, they are an essential part of the laws of our nature.

But while we scarcely deem these assertions deserving of serious reply, we cannot refrain from expressing the triumph which such an argument, on the part of Mr. Rennell, has

assigned to the view of the complete materiality of the whole man; and taking death as the touchstone of the immaterial hypothesis, we contend that, if man had a soul, the contemplation of, and preparation for its season of perfect liberty, together with the weakened state of its "sluggish prison" would cause, not equal, but increased vigour and ardour, to that of any former period—at least, during its connexion with matter. But how contrary to universal experience are such statements! exceptions, as we before allowed, do occur; but they are of extraordinary, and of very rare occurrence; cases also occur, in which great vigour of *body* is experienced, even at "the very moment of impending dissolution;" and if such arguments, in support of immaterialism, are deserving of any consideration, these cases would as successfully prove the immortality of the body, as the other instances do the immortality of the mind. But they are all equally beside the question, and only demonstrate the weakness of that cause which, can cling to such cases for support; for, in the language of a Reviewer before quoted, "The facts, themselves, constitute an exception to the general rule. The mind, in an immense majority of instances, becomes weak, as the body tends towards death. It will often be found that a temporary stimulus has excited the feeble mind to a short-lived exertion, or that some change in the circulation of the brain, perhaps that remission of inflammatory action which oftens precedes death, has resumed its original vigour in its declining moments."

From the organization of the brain; from the mental manifestations connected with it; and from the influence which it communicates to, and receives from, the body, we proceed, as a further means of proving that our mental powers are the result of the organization of matter, to an instance that dreadful affliction of the mind—INSANITY; while we may remark, in passing, that, according to the doctrine of an immortal soul, there must be epileptic souls, melancholy souls, and souls raving mad.

The insane mind, upon reference to our medical institutions, will be found to be treated as a disease, not of an immaterial spirit, but of that part of our organization which enables us to judge, to think, to reason. Mr. Lawrence states that he has examined, after death, the heads of many insane persons, and has hardly ever seen a single brain which did not exhibit obvious marks of disease. Insane symptoms, too, have the same relation to the brain, that vomiting has

to the stomach, cough to the lungs, or any other deranged function to their corresponding organs. These views are fortified by the effects produced upon insane persons, for neither psalm singing, nor prayers, are, of themselves, efficacious in restoring such, whilst vigorous medical treatment is found to be as much so in curing an "immortal soul," as when applied to an arm, a leg, or any other diseased member of the frame of man: yet how absurd such treatment would be if our thinking powers were not dependent upon, and caused by our organization; then, indeed, were they not so, Bethelam Hospital must be evacuated by Cline, Abernethy, and Lawrence, and suitably taken possession of by those renowned practitioners, Bengo Collyer, George Clayton, and *the Rev. Rowland Hill*.

What, it has been pertinently asked, should we think of persons who gravely told us that jaundice was a disease of an immaterial principle; that asthma was an affection of a spiritual being; and that insanity was the disorder of an immortal soul? We answer that we should think of them precisely as we think of the Christian Advocate of Cambridge—that they were not judicious and prudent, indeed, but that they were *consistent*, and the *only* class of consistent defenders of immaterialism; the absurdity being chargeable not upon them, but upon the system which they support.

From the brain and its diseases, as demonstrating that our thinking powers are the result of organization, we proceed to notice some phenomena connected with the BLOOD; which also tend to prove that life, as well as mind, proceeds from our organization. The circulation of the blood, and the interesting facts connected with it, are generally known; our physicians have succeeded, in an extraordinary manner, in what may be almost called renewing life, by the transfusion of blood from healthy persons, into the veins of those in whom life had become nearly extinct—a practice, we find, successfully pursued so long back as 1665. Dr. Lower, in the *Philosophical Transactions*, states that he procured a dog of an ordinary size and two mastiffs; he opened the jugular vein of the small dog, and permitted its blood to flow till it ceased to howl, became feeble, and fell into convulsions: he then transfused the arterial blood of one of the mastiffs, till the vessels of the small dog were again filled; and thus repeatedly emptied and filled the vessels of the small dog, until he had exhausted the blood of the mastiff, which consequently died. He then closed the incision in the jugular vein of the small dog, which, upon being untied,

leaped from the table, fawned upon its master, and, to wipe off the blood, rolled upon the grass, as if nothing particular had happened. The French physicians of those times carried the doctor's experiment farther, by applying the principle to human beings with extraordinary success—a success which tended, in those days of ignorance, to expose the prejudices which existed as to noble and ignoble blood; for it was found that the blood even of a prince might be improved, or the immortal soul kept alive within a peer's body, by a few ounces of blood extracted from the veins of a calf, or the arteries of a fox. But these experiments, however successful, were found to be too "levelling," and were ultimately and *wisely*, "in their generation," suppressed by the King of France and the Pope of Rome.

But what conclusion do these experiments cause us to draw—that life proceeds from an immaterial soul; or, that the whole of man, and every thing appertaining unto him, are caused by his organization?

Passing from particular details to the combined qualities of the frame of man, for the purpose, on the one hand, of demonstrating his materiality; and on the other, of exposing the monstrous absurdities inseparable from the doctrine of an immortal soul, we take the human offspring, not merely at the period of its birth, but even prior to that event, as stated by Mr. Lawrence from Sir E. Home's experiments, who "was shewn a man eight months previous to his birth, almost as broad, and a little longer, than a pin's head; that he satisfied himself that the brain of this homunculus was discernible. Now could the immaterial mind have been connected with it at this time, or was the tenement too small for so ethereal a lodger? The believers in the separate existence of mind have left us quite in the dark, on the precise time when the spiritual guest arrives at his corporeal dwelling, the interesting and important moment of the amalgamation, or combination of the earthly dust and the ethereal essence." The Roman Catholics, however, (who, by the way, are really consistent in their immaterialism) cut the knot which could not be untied, by deciding that the little mortal *had* a soul to be saved; and it accordingly directed midwives, in cases when the death of the child was apprehended, to have it baptized, and thus save the little sinner's soul from perdition.

We now stop to review what we have written in the present and the preceding numbers, upon the philosophical

department of our subject. We proposed to prove that life and mind were the result of organization, and not of an immaterial soul. We have instanced the absurdities with which the latter doctrine is surrounded. We acknowledge the difficulties, while we appreciate the importance, of this abstruse inquiry. We revert to Newton's principle of finding an *adequate* and a *rational* cause for the effects which we see in creation; we think we have done so, and, so thinking, we do not seek to multiply causes. We apply this principle of argument to the doctrine of an immortal soul, and find that it neither supplies an adequate, nor a comprehensible, cause for the effects which we witness. We look from the mite up to man, and we submit that an immaterial spiritual agency fails in accounting, even according to the doctrines of its supporters, for the innumerable varieties which living beings present to us; but that matter, variously modified and organized, presents an intelligible solution of, and an adequate cause for, all these effects; and should we be called upon to explain *how* matter can perceive, remember, judge, reason—we might reply, by repeating similar questions, as to *how* spirit could perform these operations, and what evidence could be given to us of the existence of spirit at all, with the qualities which are ascribed to it. But are we, because we cannot tell, nor *cannot be told* even by these profound inquirers, *how* these various phenomena are accomplished, therefore, to acquiesce in the gravest absurdities, and the most monstrous contradictions? We certainly do not know *how* the brain accomplishes the mental phenomena, but we are equally ignorant as to *how* the liver secretes bile, *how* the muscles contract, or *how* any other living purpose is effected. We are also equally ignorant as to *how* bodies are attracted to the earth, *how* iron is drawn to the magnet; and we should be equally justified in conferring spiritual agency upon the magnet, because of its attractive powers as we should upon man, in consequence of his mental and living properties.

Experience and the scriptures are our only guides in relation to ourselves and our destiny; if we go beyond their teaching we become involved in a mental labyrinth, from which there is no deliverance; for if we inquire *how* the mechanism of nature is carried on, we shall find every thing around us beyond the reach of our intellects, "from the stone which falls to the earth, to the comet which

“traverses the heavens; from the thread attracted by sealing-wax, to the revolutions of the planets; from the existence of a maggot in putrid flesh, or a mite in cheese, to the production of a Newton, or a Franklin.” Neither do we know *how* we shall exist in a future life; but we have the assurance of the appointed messengers of God, that we shall do so, and that by means of the resurrection of the dead; we examine, and are satisfied with, the evidence upon which that assurance is communicated; we compare it with the doctrine of the natural immortality of the living and thinking powers of man, and find that the one is necessarily destructive of the other. We trace this latter doctrine, and find it irreconcilable with every fact and effect proceeding from a living and thinking being, besides involving its supporters in inexplicable and endless absurdities and contradictions. We turn to an opposite hypothesis, and we persuade ourselves that it sufficiently solves all our difficulties, by admitting the evidence of sense and experience; that every manifestation of life, or of mind, which we see in creation, results from one principle, simple in itself, but variously modified and organized, suitable to, and explanatory of, the circumstances, conditions, and nature of every living being. That, in regard to man, he is only a finely organized piece of machinery; being, as was happily expressed by the late Emperor Napoleon, “A machine for the purpose of life, organized to that end; like a well made watch, destined to go for a certain time.”

This being our conviction, and these our feelings, we adopt the poetic language of the psalmist, in his address to the Supreme Being:—“*I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy works, and that my mind knoweth right well. If I ascend up into heaven thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy right hand lead me. O Lord! thou hast searched me and know me; thou knowest my downsit-ting and my uprising. O Lord! how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches.*”

The succeeding Essays will be occupied with an attempt to explain the various passages in the scriptures, some of them difficult ones, which are supposed to apply to this subject; and also with a statement of the evidence upon which the belief in a future state of existence is grounded in the New Testament.

FAST DAYS, FESTIVALS, AND SABBATHS.

ESSAY I.

"I pour out a flood of tears to think what human ceremonies have cost all mankind, and particularly what a price my native country has paid for them."—*Robert Robinson, of Cambridge.*

"In the Christian church no festival appears clearly to have been instituted, either by Jesus Christ or his apostles."—*John Robinson, of Westmorland.*

Our design, in the series of papers which will come under the title affixed to the present article, is to put upon record a body of authority and argument, tending to prove that an attention to, and veneration for, days as religious observances binding upon Christians, have been derived immediately from the church of Rome; and that these observances can remotely be traced—not to the primitive Christians and apostolic command—but to the amalgamation of corrupt Christianity with the fasts and festivals of the several heathen nations of antiquity. To this latter source, in a particular and most striking manner, we are indebted for the pious institutions said to be in commemoration of the birth, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus; together with that of the births and deaths of his apostles, and a host of saints and sinners of the Roman catholic church. But glaring as we deem these impositions to be, and injurious as they necessarily are to a right estimate and practice of that religion which claims *peculiarly* for the objects of its worship a God—"that made the world and all things therein"—and who, as "Lord of heaven and earth," dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, "seeing he giveth to all—life, and breath, and all things;" yet we are not sure that we should have occupied our pages with such an investigation, which is necessarily a laborious one, were the ceremonies in question confined to the church of England and its "*Holy Mother*," (as some of the early reformers entitle the church of Rome;) but as, in fact, the great body of dissenters afford their sanction to these heathen institutions, and even rigidly observe some of the most superstitious of them, we deem it our Christian duty to expose this sacred brotherhood—this

"Holy Alliance;" descending, as it does, from the Roman pontiff to the enlightened Unitarian priest; and we are not sure that even the Quakers, with all their "*simplicity*," are quite free from a participation in these "pious frauds;" for Barclay, in his Apology, (349) states of "SUNDAY," or the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, that the Quakers "agree with Calvin in giving it a spiritual sense;" and that, from various causes, "they feel themselves sufficiently moved to hold meetings, and abstain from working on this day;" and in a modern Quaker work, written by *Jesse Kersey*, and first published at Philadelphia, we find, under the head "Days and Times," that "it is the practice of the Friends to unite with *other professors* of Christianity, in setting apart one day in seven, for the purpose of divine worship." But the Unitarians, a numerous portion of them at least, from whose professions, as the assumed revivers of primitive Christianity, we are entitled to expect better things, far exceed even some other bodies of dissenters, in their adherence to the ceremonies of the church of Rome; for that class of Unitarians whom Mr. Belsham represents, content themselves with adopting "The Book of Common Prayer, revised according to the plan of the late Dr. Samuel Clark;" although that learned writer's *revision* of the "Book of Common Prayer," was, in truth, but a very moderate one, being chiefly confined to points affecting the doctrine of the Trinity, and with such exceptions, retaining *unreformed* several of the creeds, collects, vigils, fasts, and festivals of the wicked and corrupt "Mother of Harlots." Dr. Priestly too, when at Birmingham, drew up a set of forms for all parts of public worship, entitled "Forms of Prayer and other Offices for the Use of Unitarian Christians, 1783." This production contains "Forms for the Morning and Evening Service of the Lord's Day—Offices for infant and adult Baptism," addresses to the communicant for the second and third service, "Prayers for *Fast Days*," and "Prayers to be used on the Morning of *Easter Sunday*."

Both the general and particular Baptists certainly do not countenance many of the superstitious observances thus supported by Dr. Priestly and Mr. Belsham, but they are all advocates for the strictest attention to a sabbath, either on the first or on the seventh day of the week; and, in addition, the Scottish Baptists refrain from eating blood, and observe the "Feasts of Charity."

The Presbyterians observe Sundays with the greatest strictness, and the Thursdays previous to receiving what is

called the "Lord's Supper," are held as solemn fasts; Mr. John Wesley, on the part of the Methodists, boasts of their adherence to the ceremonies of the national church; "they approve of, and adhere to, all that they learned when they were children in their catechism and Common Prayer Book." "The Methodists agree with the church of England in externals and circumstantialia." To the objection of some, remarks Mr. Wesley, "that we do not observe the laws of the church, of our observances I will mention a few. First, Days of fasting and abstinence. Second, The forty days of lent. Third, The ember days at the four seasons. Fourth, The three rogation days. Fifth, All Fridays in the year, except Christmas day." And, in the conditions for admission into this body, contained in the articles signed, May 1st, 1743, by "Charles and John Wesley," an observance of the seasons appointed for "fasting or abstinence" is treated as indispensable. Finally, Mr. Belsham, the Unitarian minister of Essex Street, not merely appoints the service "for prayer for every Lord's day throughout the year—the same to be used with the *PROPER COLLECTS* upon *Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Day, and Whitsunday,*" but likewise follows in the footsteps of the established church in its *Christian* "orders for morning and evening prayer," for the "burial of the dead;" in "prayers to be used in his majesty's navy every day;" "prayers before a fight at sea;" "prayers for single persons" (*Christians* of course) "that cannot meet to join with others, by reason of the fight." And this gentleman even goes so far as to submit to the degradation of wearing the surplice in the public performance of his "*reformed*" service. So that calmly viewing the general body of dissenters, we feel that their practices but too fully justify what has been said, by the author of a pamphlet* in reply to Mr. Brougham and the Edinburgh Review; that among them "a resemblance to the church is rather affected than avoided; their places of worship are no more called meetings, but chapels; their ministers assume the title of reverend. In some cases both the liturgy and surplice are used. The dissenting chapels are like *cheap shops*; there is more shew in their windows,

* "Letter to H. Brougham, Esq. M.P. upon his Durham Speech, and Three Articles in the last Edinburgh Review, upon the subject of the Clergy."—Rivington, 1823.

“more bowing for custom than among the old established traders; the difference is in the *quality*, not in the *appearance* of the article.” (Page 11.) Agreeing, as we do, in the general sentiment expressed in this quotation, we cannot help congratulating the reverend and pious author upon the mercantile phraseology with which he has so truly and appropriately illustrated his subject; for, of a truth, both the churches and chapels are places of *trade*, though rarely, we apprehend, entitled to the appellation of *cheap shops*. But how humiliating to the dissenters is this concession of the reverend advocate in their favour, that *they* should affect a resemblance to that church which their best writers have so truly designated as anti-christian; the being which, indeed, can afford the only justification for their dissent.

Having thus glanced at the close connexion which exists between all the sects, from the Catholic downwards, and which, having priests, as a consequence practise rites and ordinances, we proceed, at once, to trace the origin and authority of those injunctions which the established religion and laws of our country call upon us, in direct violation of apostolic authority, to “*observe days, and months, and seasons, and years.*” These “*times and seasons*” are divided into fasts and festivals. FASTS are assumed to be days of religious abstinence, and have, either really or nominally, been observed in most ages and nations. The first recorded instance which we meet with of fasting, is in the time of Moses; who enjoined a solemn day of expiation; this fast was instituted by divine authority. The Jews had also other times of fasting, and of humiliation, called “*the fasts of the congregation;*” all of which they observed with great strictness. Between fasting and abstinence the church of Rome drew a distinction, but the church of England has copied the fasts without this distinction; indeed there is a statute which declares—that whoever, in preaching or writing, affirms it to be necessary on fast days to abstain from flesh, for the purpose of saving the soul of man, is to be punished as a spreader of false news. Yet one of the homilies in the church Prayer Book, borrowed from the catholic service, and which was passed at the council of Chalcedon, declares—that withholding meat, drink, and all natural food from the body, during fasts, is “proper for Christian duty.” How this injunction of the 630 *holy fathers*, of which the council was composed, was and is observed, we shall advert to in our after pages.

FEASTS—among the heathen nations, were very numerous, and instituted on various occasions. First, In honour of the gods, when they had conferred any signal favour; and, secondly, in memory of particular individuals. From these two classes of feasts we shall shew that the numerous feasts in the "*reformed Christian*" calendar are borrowed, even to the most trifling points of observance.

FEASTS OR FESTIVALS, are also treated by church writers as synonymous with "*holy days*;" thus Christmas-day, Easter-day, and all Sundays are festivals.

SABBATHS—that is, as assumed, Christian sabbaths—for it is with these only that we are concerned—have three appellations. First, *The Lord's day*—in reference to the resurrection of Jesus; in regard to which we shall prove that the year—the month—much less the actual day, upon which that event took place, is entirely unknown. Second, *Sabbath*—from the Jewish Sabbath—an institution for the Jews only, and unauthorized by Christianity. Third, *Sunday*—from our Saxon ancestors—who dedicated this day to the sun, calling it "*Sunnun Daeg*," or Sun's-day. The Romans also denominated this day "*Dies Solis*," or the day of the sun, worshipping that luminary as a god; but this day was not celebrated as a Christian ordinance till the after part of the reign of Constantine, the Christians, during the first part of his sovereignty, observing the Jewish sabbath. In the year 321, the emperor just named passed an edict, commanding the present observance.

In Nelson's Companion to the Fasts and Festivals of the Church of England, we learn that "festivals, or holy days, "are days set apart *by the church*," (mark, not by Christianity) "either for the remembrance of some special mercies of " God; such as the birth and resurrection of Christ, the " descent of the Holy Ghost, &c.; or in memory of the *great* " *heroes* of the Christian religion, the blessed apostles, and " *other saints*. That they are of ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTION, agreeable to scripture, in the general design of them, "for the promoting of piety, and consonant to the practice "of the primitive church." The primitive here, of course, only meaning the papal church. By the 5 and 6 Edward VI., cap. 3, it appears that the compilers of our liturgy conceived that all festivals were "to call men to remembrance "of their duty; and it hath been" (they say) "wholesomely provided that there should be some certain times "and days appointed, wherein Christians should cease from "all kinds of labour, and should apply themselves only and

“wholly to the aforesaid holy works, properly pertaining unto true religion: the which times appointed for the same are called holy days, for godly and holy works wherewith only God is to be honoured.” The days thus to be kept were Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, the Purification, the Epiphany, the Holy Innocents, the Nativities of all the Apostles, and “great church heroes,” &c. These days, and “none others,” were directed to be kept holy.

This statute was afterwards repealed by Mary—continued void throughout the long reign of Elizabeth, but was revived by James. Yet *holy* as these days (and “none others”) were enjoined to be kept, being exclusively for “godly and holy works, wherewith God only was to be honoured,” we find that the appointed leaders to the paths of righteousness—the shepherds of the *holy* flocks, even in those times, were, upon Sundays and other *holy* days, characterized by “posting over their services as fast as they could gallope; for eyther they had two places to serve, or else there were some games to be playde in the afternoon: as lying for the whetstone; heathenish dancing for the ring; a beare or a bull to be baited; or else a jackanapes to ride on horseback; or an interlude to be playde in the church.”—*Introduction to Strutt's Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*.

The AUTHORITY for the institution of these *Christian* fasts and festivals, or *holy* days, is derived, not from that which can alone be of any real authority to the Christian—namely, the New Testament, but from the twentieth of the thirty-nine articles, which were agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops, in 1562, “for the avoiding of diversity of opinion, and for the establishment of consent touching true religion.” We pass by, in relation to these articles, the additions as well as curtailments which they underwent, such having been stated in page 115 of our last number; and recur to what is not there noticed of the act of 1571; in which the thirty-nine articles are referred to as the articles of religion, in “an imprinted book”—“for avoiding diversities of opinion.” A controversy has thence arisen upon these articles, as to which and *where* is the “imprinted book” thus described? and upon which the act of parliament assumes to be framed. The fact is, that the book so quoted is said not to be in existence; whilst in the manuscripts of the thirty-nine articles which have reached us, both in English and Latin, there are numberless various readings,

some of which materially affect the sense of the text; and one of the most important of these various readings is to be found in the twentieth; that too being the article immediately to our purpose, we proceed to a consideration of the important powers which it claims in giving to the church power to "decree rites or ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith." It is an unquestionable fact, says Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, "that the ceremonies and holy days of all the good people of the church of England were, among 117 priests, carried by a majority of one vote, and that given by proxy. Whether the absent member, who gave the casting vote, were talking, or journeying, or hunting, or sleeping, is immaterial; he was the god almighty of this article of English religion, and his power decreed rites and ceremonies." But, in the course of the very laborious controversy relative to the thirty-nine articles, facts have come out in relation to that part of the twentieth article referred to above, which is even of more importance than what is stated by Robinson; for, absurd as may be the passing of any decree by the casting vote of an absent person, yet it must be esteemed to have *been* passed, and, so far, may be binding upon those who can sanction *such authority*. But the truth is that the particular portion in question of the twentieth article was not inserted at all in that copy of the articles which, in 1671, received the sanction of the legislature. Bishop Laud, on his trial, was accused of having fabricated it; which, however, he denied; still it did not form a part of the articles as established by the 13th of Elizabeth, or as agreed to by the convocation of 1562 or 1571.* And yet, with all this uncertainty as to the authority of the article, and the entire absence of scripture sanction for *any* rite or ceremony whatever, the *reformed* church of England proceeded, heedless of authority, to issue its decrees in support of the ceremonies of its heathen and catholic predecessors; even retaining the very lessons, as directed by the catholic church, to be read on these "*holy days*," for "godly discipline." The catholic arrangement, too, has been preserved of making very numerous selections, not exclusively from the Old or New Testament, but from "Wisdom," "Moses," and other apocryphal books. Yet so essential is a conformity to these

* We have before us the title of a pamphlet printed in 1710, called "Priestcraft in Perfection; or, a Detection of inserting and continuing this Clause in the Twentieth Article of the Articles of the Church of England."

ceremonies, *even thus derived*, esteemed to be by the highest church authorities, that we are advertised in the Book of Common Prayer, that "the transgression of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God;" they being for "godly discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification." We are also referred, by the defenders of ceremonies, to the Jewish law, though such persons ought to have known that these institutions were but for a time, and until they had fulfilled their destined object; that the law, indeed, came by Moses, but that grace and freedom came by Jesus Christ; that his mission having proclaimed the "*perfect law of liberty*," the chosen of God were no longer under bondage; thus relieving them from the yoke of ceremonies, which neither the Jews in the time of Jesus, nor their fathers, had been able to bear. But, without taking this line of remark, which, as Christians, we should esteem of itself to be decisive, let us glance at the Jewish ceremonies, their authority and objects; bearing in our recollection, what are called the Christian ceremonies, with *their authority*, and *their objects*. In the first place there was no Jewish fast, or feast, ever appointed in commemoration of the birth, or death, of any individual; eminent as particular men had been, as well in teaching as in delivering their nation, they had no days appointed for their remembrance; nor did they, with all their superstition, honour with the title of *saints*—Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob: to act on the principles, and to imitate the example of these great though uncanonized patriarchs being esteemed, in those days, at least as effective "in godly discipline" as the strictest observance of all the saints days in the calendar can be regarded in the present; besides which, the Jewish institutions were for national not personal objects, and intended, by means adapted to the then state of society, to keep in remembrance the unity of God, and the benevolence of his government, as demonstrated in all the divine conduct towards their nation. Thus their sabbath commemorated the creation of the world. The passover their departure from Egypt. The feast of Pentecost the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The feast of trumpets, which was not a religious, but a civil ceremony, proclaimed the commencement of the year. The feast of tabernacles, at which the whole of the nation attended in the temple, and dwelt eight days under tents of leaves, was to remind them that their fathers had dwelt forty years

in tents, as wanderers in the wilderness. So that with these, in common with other minor ceremonies, the miraculous events in the Jewish history were completely interwoven, and being so, the importance of a strict and perfect observance of them became essential; and a reference to the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, in which these ceremonies are commanded, will prove their admirable fitness to the then condition of the particular nation upon whom their observance was enjoined, and the essentially moral, as well as benevolent, objects with which they were attended. But, although the Jewish ritual appoints no days in commemoration of their really eminent men—their “heroes,” to adopt the church phrase—the Christians, as they call themselves, in after times were careful to supply this great defect; and one of the reasons given for the establishment of Advent, or the forty days fast prior to what is styled the “coming of Christ,” is—that “it was instituted in honour of the fast of Moses; as that of Lent was in honour of the fast of Christ; and that as Moses, by a fast of forty days upon the mount, was prepared to receive the two tables of the law from God, so it is incumbent upon Christians to prepare themselves, by a like abstinence, for the reception of the eternal word, the true and great lawgiver coming in the flesh.”—See *Shepherd's Elucidation of the Rites and Ceremonies of the Churches of England and Ireland*, 1801. But how desperate must have been the condition of that church which in “decreeing rites and ceremonies” is thus driven to institute a forty days’ fast, in honour of an event, of which the individuals immediately concerned took no special cognizance;—and which the Jewish people, though much addicted to ceremonial establishments, passed by, without observance; equally when they were the chosen nation of God, as since the dissolution of their polity. How absurd, too, is the conduct of this “*holy church*” in its “decrees;” for even if there *had* been such a fast among the Jews, unless it had been commanded to be continued by Jesus, those who observe it would, to the extent of this ceremony, constitute themselves Jews, not Christians; and then, indeed, they must really “*fast*,” not as by the present mode, in which even the most rigid of the saints are permitted the “*free use* of oil, of wine, and of all sorts of fish.”*

* The season for observing this last fast, which we are told is “incumbent upon Christians,” was, like Christmas, even among the *holy fathers*, subject to considerable variations: and some hot disputes arose in

But, in looking at the two codes of ceremonies in question, and without running a parallel between them—without even glancing at the really moral character of the Jewish, and at the pagan and immoral character of the English church calendar—without observing that the one had time, place, season, and object distinctly set forth—and that the other, which may be (according to the Book of Common Prayer) “varied according to the various exigencies of times and occasions”—without referring to the authority of the one, which had God for its institutor—and of the other, which rests on a claim of the “church” to “decree rites and ceremonies,” we would contend that, separate and apart from any of these considerations, the church calendar would not possess the slightest claim to the character of Christian; as we should contend that no ceremony, be it a fast or a festival, could be binding upon Christians, unless *distinctly and positively appointed—not by Moses—but by Jesus*. But, upon looking to this latter source, to him who only can be the law-giver in Christianity, we find that his mission was to destroy those “*shadows of things that were to come*,” that the whole spirit and genius of his religion was opposed to ceremonial observances; and also that that great follower in his footsteps, the apostle Paul, expresses alarm for those Christians who had evinced a taste for their former “bondage,” from which they had been delivered by having “*known God, or rather being known of God; how then*” (exclaims he) “*turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements of this world, by observing new moons and sabbaths, and days and months, and seasons and years. I am afraid of you,*” (says this greatest of the apostles) “*lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*”

The moral value of religious festivals will be best estimated by a reference to the ancient, as well as modern, authorized practices and observances appointed for those days. Though, if such facts did not exist, we should still find some difficulty in discovering how, in the language of

consequence, as the Missals of Ambrose and Gregory materially differed in relation to it. The church, therefore, being resolved to decide the controversy, appealed to a miracle. The two Missals were laid upon the altar of the cathedral of Milan, the church doors shut and sealed; in the morning Gregory's Missal was found torn in pieces, and Ambrose's placed upon the altar in a posture of being read; this might have appeared final against poor Gregory—but a *power behind the altar, greater than the altar itself*, sagely decided that Gregory's Missal being torn and scattered about, it should be used all over the world, and Ambrose's only in the church of Milan!

the Book of Common Prayer, the "dull mind of man could
"be stirred up to a remembrance of his duty to God," by
an observance, for example, of the ember days; the three
rogation days; the days of the holy innocents; the nativity—
with their accompanying vigils—of Jesus and his apostles;
the purification of the virgin; or of the forty days of lent;
except, indeed, in regard to the latter, virtue can be
extracted from an act of parliament passed in 1549; in
which we are apprised "That though all days and meats
"are in themselves alike, yet fasting being a great help
"to virtue, and to the subduing of the body to the mind;
"and that all persons, excepting the weak, or those that
"have the king's licence, shall, under several penalties,
"fast; yet a distinction of meats being conducive to the
"advancement of the fishing trade, and therefore be it
"enacted that Lent, and all Saturdays, and Fridays, and
"ember days, shall be fish days." Neither can we dis-
cover religious truth, or much which should cause "the
"dull mind of man" to venerate the Deity, in the instructions
given, in connexion with the festival of the "holy virgin,"
in which she is styled "the empress of heaven;" "the
"queen of heaven;" "the lady of the universe;" "the
"only hope of sinners;" and where she is called upon "to
"command God her son to forgive those which he had
"forgotten, but now did it not for their—but for her sake."
Although the church of England may not fairly be charge-
able, in its festival dedicated to the virgin, with blasphemy
to the full extent of that above stated, yet the difference is
one of degree, not of kind, or of object; for, in regard to its
festivals, in common with every other part of its establish-
ment, the approach to its great prototype is so close, and
the imitation so perfect, that it is justly complimented by
Butler, the modern and liberal Roman catholic writer, in
his article on "The Church of France," in the following
unqualified manner: "Of all protestant churches the
"national church of England most nearly resembles the
"church of Rome. It has retained much of her dogma,
"and much of her discipline. Down to the sub-deacon it
"has retained the whole of her hierarchy; and, like her, has
"deans, chapters, prebends, archdeacons, rectors, and
"vicars; a liturgy taken, in a great measure, from the
"catholic; and composed like it, of psalms, canticles, the
"three creeds, litanies, epistles, gospels, prayers, and
"responses. Both churches have the sacraments of baptism
"and the eucharist; the absolution of the sick; the burial

"service; the sign of the cross in baptism; the reservation of confirmation and order to bishops; the different episcopal and sacerdotal dress; the organ; a cathedral service; FEASTS AND FASTS. Without adopting all the general councils of the church of Rome, the church of England has adopted the first three of them; and without acknowledging the authority of the other councils, or the authority of the fathers, the English divines of the established church allow that the early councils, and early fathers, are entitled to a high degree of respect."*

Such approbation from a catholic writer must be rather humiliating to that class of easy, unread churchmen, who shudder at very the name of popery. It is, however, well merited; and both churches have proved themselves diligent imitators of their heathen instructors; in support of which, as it regards the church of England, and in relation to the subject of the present article, we refer to its "CALENDAR" a term which, in common with its contents, is of heathen origin—calendar, or *kalendar*, from *calendarium*; invented by Numa, for making known to his subjects all matters relative to their feasts or ceremonies. The "*Christian Calendar*," then of the church of England, (part of which is adopted by Mr. Belsham, in what ought to be entitled "The Essex Street Missal,") consists of the following days; which Nelson, in his "Companion to the Fasts and Festivals of the Church of England," asserts are designed to "improve the HOLY SEASONS to the *advantage of our souls*;" they are divided into two classes. First, Of those which are moveable, and therefore dependant upon Easter, there are eight. Secondly, Of immoveable feasts there are eighty-one. Besides these there are of vigils, fasts, and days of abstinence seventy-one; together with all the Fridays in the year, and "four certain solemn days for particular services," two of which are appropriated to that religious explosion, the gunpowder plot, and to the memory of our *pious saint*, Charles I., whose death is somewhat oddly termed a "martyrdom," making altogether 216 days; being more than half the year set apart by the law of the land, and by the solemn injunctions of the Book of Common Prayer, for religious observance;—to disregard which we are apprized "is no small offence before God." Now, as it would be tedious and unprofitable to trace up in detail this

* The Philological and Biographical Works of Charles Butler, of Lincoln's Inn, vol. 5, p. 176.—Clarke and Sons, 1817.

mass of absurdity, we shall confine ourselves to the more prominent days and seasons, beginning with *Christmas day*, which is held in commemoration of "the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ;" then proceed to the "*holy week*," taking in Holy, or Good Friday, this period being "in remembrance of Christ's passion and crucifixion;" then *lent*; from thence to *Sundays*, which, whether they be regarded as festivals instituted by the church, or as sabbaths in continuation of the Jewish institutions, or as having a reference to both, we design to prove, in common with the other days just named, are all without Christian authority—are violations of the religion of Jesus, and have for their chief, if not for their sole models, either Jewish observances, or generally the superstitious rites and ceremonies of the heathen nations.

The "feast of the nativity," or Christmas day, is now held in Europe on the 25th December, in honour, as it is said, of the birth of Jesus, upon which day we are instructed, by the highest church authorities, to have in our minds "great admiration of God"—"great thankfulness to the blessed Jesus for *consenting* to be born on this day;" yet in despite of all this piety, this gratitude, and this *high* authority, we do not find that "Christ's nativity" was a matter ever referred to by Jesus himself:* we may safely infer, indeed, that it was an event never celebrated during his life, or after his resurrection, by his personal friends, by his apostles, or by the first Christians:—and we know that the second century gave birth to this "*great festival*," a period in church history in which little of Christianity remained, it having been corrupted by, and amalgamated with heathenism. The day of Jesus' birth, too, has been a matter of much laborious investigation, and not altogether without cause; for chronological accuracy with a church which "decrees rites and ceremonies," is supposed to

* The two first chapters of Matthew, and of Luke, in which such obscene stories are told, and such monstrous absurdities are recorded, concerning the birth of Jesus, are now admitted by the best authorities, to be forgeries; in proof of this assertion we refer the reader to Pope on the Miraculous Conception; Lardner's Works, vol. 1; Dr. Williams' "Free Inquiry;" Priestly's Early Opinions; Evanson's Dissonance; the "Improved Version" of the New Testament; and the Freethinking Christians' Magazine for 1814. All, indeed, that we know of the commencement of the public life of Jesus, and of his age, is that the holy spirit descended upon him—that a voice from heaven proclaimed him to be the well-beloved son of God; and that at this time "*Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being the son of Joseph.*" Luke iii. 23.

aid and confirm its institutions; hence the anxiety to give to the 25th day of December, the honour of the "nativity." Nelson, in his "Companion to the Fasts and Festivals of the Church of England," labours to remove the difficulties which encumber this point, by asserting that "Jesus' birth-day was a great festival in the *primitive*" (i. e. Roman Catholic) "church; though we have no certain evidence of the exact time which was observed, the 25th December, there is little doubt, is *the very day*;" though if the day were mistaken, it will be pardonable in those who think they are not mistaken." (51.) That mistakes, or inconsistencies, either do, or have existed, even in England, is unquestionable; the alteration of the style alone shews the absurdity of any church, either past or present, in observing what we now call the 25th December as the "very day." The Eastern and Western churches, too, have never agreed upon "*the very day*," the former keeping it on the 5th January, the latter the 25th December; though not always consistent even to that date, there being variations in the Western churches from the 20th to the 25th December. There were other churches who celebrated this "*very day*" in April—others in May; and the Greek church now observe Christmas in February. Yet the English national church is, without doubt, infallible upon this, in common with all other parts of its service; and we have before us a learned and laboured work, written by a clergyman of that diocese, which, in our own times, is blessed with so orthodox and so immaculate a bishop. The title of this work is expressive of its character, and of the importance, too, which is attached to precision, relative to the birth of Jesus; it is "A Brief but True Account of the certain Year, Month, Day, and Minute of the Birth of Jesus Christ.—By John Butler, D.D. Rector in the Diocese of Peterboro'.—1671." And this inquiry results in proving the day to be the 25th December; but, in despite of all this learning, and this "true account" of the "certain day," it is with great reluctance admitted by Sir Isaac Newton, by Shepperd, upon this subject, and yet more strongly, and more recently, by Brady, in his "Clavis Calendaria," that "there are not any certain traditions about the years of Christ." (See Newton on Daniel.) "The day of our Lord's Nativity it is now settled beyond all dispute, by arguments incontrovertible, did *not* take place on the 25th December." (Brady, vol. 2, p. 330.)

One strong evidence of the absurdity and inutility of these observances is the circumstance that they may be,

and have been, alternately instituted and abrogated by human authority, and in compliance with human interest or human caprice. The laws of morality remain unchanged in all ages; the commands of God, if given in favour of any institution, may, at any time, be referred to as a standard; but how can we be safe, if at one time men in authority can command the observance of days, and at another time their non-observance; if we are *here* directed to observe one period, and *there* compelled to regard another as sacred to the same object? Yet such are the inconsistencies which the history of feasts and fasts frequently present us with. In the earlier ages many doubtless did not observe these times and seasons, yet it is described, by Chrysostom, as a festival "renowned far and wide, from Thrace even to Cadiz, "as of all festivals the most venerable—the mother and "metropolis of the rest." And although the good people of this country are *now* commanded by those "in authority" to keep this day holy, they were, during the commonwealth, in the seventeenth century, commanded also, from the "authority" *then* existing, to "put down Christmas day, and all other "superstitious festivals;" each command being, of course, equally "part and parcel" of the law of the land—equally binding upon all pious and loyal subjects—and in an equal degree essential to "stir up the dull mind of man," to the performance of his duties. It is, at this time, our duty, according to our legitimate Christian lawgivers, to maintain a veneration for this festival; but precisely the contrary, was, at one time, binding upon our ancestors. A scarce tract published in 1648, informs us that on "Wednesday, December 22, 1647," the crier of Canterbury, *by the appointment of Master Maior*, "openly proclaimed that Christmas day, and all other superstitious festivals, should be put down, and that a market "should be kept on Christmas day." And among the single sheets preserved in the British Museum, is *an order of parliament*, December 24, 1652, directing "that no observation "shall be had of the five-and-twentieth day of December, "commonly called Christmas day; nor any solemnity used "or exercised in churches upon that day in respect thereof." —See *Brand's Popular Antiquities*, vol. 1, p. 370.

Leaving, therefore, as we may well do, the observers of this festival to settle their own differences, and to reconcile their perplexities, we proceed to submit the evidence by which we think it may be clearly established that the festival of Christmas is derived from two festivals, and both of them heathen; the one originating in pagan Rome, the other

among the Northern European nations; both of which, occurring at the same season of the year, were naturalized by the Roman catholic church, under the assumed plea of commemorating the birth of Jesus, and therefore called the mass of Christ, and afterwards Christmas. The latter term being still held as expressive of that event, not merely by the established church, but even by a portion of the Unitarian body in their *reformed* "Book of Common Prayer," we think it well to recur to the origin of the term. The mass of Christ, was the mass or eucharist celebrated on the assumed birthday of Christ. To make religion bend to the pagan prejudices of the people has been an invariable feature in ecclesiastical history. The heathens, even more than the Jews, were averse to the simplicity of the Christian religion; with the view, therefore, to their national conversion—not from vice and the practice of abominable rites—not even from the *objects*—but from the *names* merely of their worship, a project was formed, in the third century, for the purpose of permitting the new converts to Christianity to observe the festivals of the countries in which they resided, subject to one most remarkable condition: that, "instead of celebrating those days to the honour, and in the name of heathen gods, they should dedicate them, and reckon them all sacred to the memory of some martyr or Christian saint;" for it was argued that "the simple and unskilled multitude, by reason of corporeal delights, remained in the error of idols; in order, therefore, that the '*principal thing*' might be corrected in them, and that, instead of their own vain worship, they should turn their eyes upon God, they were to be permitted at the memories of holy martyrs *to make merry*, and to delight themselves; and *be dissolved into joy*."* These "pious" and "devout" instructions would seem to have met with the most ample success among our own heathen ancestors; who, when they offered human and other sacrifices to the god ODIN, concluded the ceremony with drinking the healths of their several gods. This custom the *Christian missionaries*, as they are called, could not abolish; and therefore incorporated it with their religious ceremonies, directing that, instead of ODIN, NIORD, and BRAGE, they should drink the health of the saints, of Jesus, and of God!—See *Mallett's Northern Antiquities*, vol. 1, p. 311. And, in after times, we learn from Bede's Ecclesiastical History, that Pope Gregory,

* See Mallett's Northern Antiquities.

in his letter to Militus, an English abbot, thus instructs him: "Whereas the people were accustomed to sacrifice many oxen in honour of demons, let them celebrate a religious and solemn festival, and not slay the animals to the devil, but to eat them themselves, to the praise of God!!!" It also appears that St. Augustine and forty other monks were dispatched by the same pontiff, to erect temples *to the worship of God* in our island; in which project their adoption of the pagan practices caused them to be successful. The heathen temples, with their altars, were left standing entire, but were appropriated to the new religion, and continued so to the period of the protestant reformation, when these altars were taken down and destroyed. So attached, however, were the "simple and unskilled multitude," and the artful and *well-skilled* priesthood, to what had been the establishments of catholicism, that we learn in a work upon "The Rise and Antiquity of Cathedral Worship—1699, London," and from other sources, that Archbishop Laud, and others, succeeded in re-establishing altars, and the ceremonies connected with them, in the protestant churches; assertions but too well confirmed by what we may observe even in our own days: and not only in our own country but, at an earlier period, on the continent, the prostration of the Christian faith was most complete, not merely to the heathen feasts, but to the minor prejudices and habits of a pagan people.* The pastimes, too, and sports of the English and other Northern nations, afford proof in illustration of our hypothesis. The WAKES were attempted to be converted into a religious institution, in resemblance of the agappæ, or love feasts of the first Christians; and they were held upon the day of the dedication of the church in each district, or the birth day of the saint whose reliques were therein deposited; and these people were directed by King Edgar "to pray devoutly, and not to betake themselves, as when they were heathens, to

* Neither the Thracians, the Celts, nor any other of the barbarous people settled in Europe, made use of letters, looking upon it as dishonourable; they held in contempt every occupation, except that of bearing arms; their priests having utterly forbid them the use of letters, pretending that *their* doctrines were only for the initiated. Thus the Emperor Charlemagne could not write; and so religiously had this prohibition of the priesthood been observed, that the Saxons, under Louis le Debonnaire, persisted in their resolution of not learning to read, when he, to accommodate them, had the Old and New Testaments turned into verse: they then willingly learnt and *sung them*, after their own manner.

“drunkenness and debauchery;” but it was found, however, in practice impossible strictly to keep the new converts to any observance in which their appetites and passions were not the chief object of gratification; and therefore “the pepal fell to letcherie, and songs, and dances, and to glotony and sinne, and so turned holyness to cursydness;” whereof the holy faders ordained the pepal to leve that “waking and to fast the evyn which is called vigilia?” And in proportion as these festivals regained their old character, they increased in popularity; the people flocked together, and the greater the reputation of the tutelary saint, the larger was the assembly. Hawkers and pedlars attended, and by degrees the religious wake became a secular fair. From these wakes originated the *church ales*, for the parish officers finding that at Christmas the wakes drew together a larger number than upon any other holy days, they, together with the priest, turned them to the account of profit, by collecting money from them, *for the support and repairs of the church*; and by way of enticement, there was brewed ready for the festival a quantity of strong ale, so that in the churches debauchery and excess of the worst kinds were patronized under the sanction of Christmas and other *holy days*; for when “this huffe cappe—this nectar of life—is set abroad, well is he that can get the soonest to it, where drunken Bacchus bears sway against Christmas, and Easter, and Whitsuntide; and when *he that spends the most at it is counted the godliest man of all the rest, and most in God’s favour, BECAUSE IT IS SPENT IN THE CHURCH!* They bestow that money which is got thereby for the repair of their churches and chapels, books *for the service of God*, cups for the celebration of the sacrament, surplices for Sir John, and other necessities.”—*Strutt’s Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, p. 325.

The names, too, as is well known of our months and days, are themselves evidence of their heathen original: thus, JANUARY from the Latin Januarius, in honour of Janus, a heathen god selected by Numa to preside over the year; from thence represented with two faces—one the *old*, expressive of his past experience; the other *new*, looking to the coming year. The first of this month was kept by the heathens as a day of extreme rejoicing, upon which they sacrificed to their god Janus, and indulged in every excess. The Christians first held it as a fast to distinguish themselves from the heathen, but it was afterwards conveniently

transformed into a pious festival, in commemoration, we are told by Nelson, "of the circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ; who, when eight days old, subjected himself to "this law, and *first shed his sacred blood for us!!!*" and the heathens, by whole nations becoming Christians, retained their old profanations, only exchanging the denomination by which such ceremonies were characterized. The minor and unobjectionable customs, too, of the heathen nations, received now the colour of Christianity; thus *new year's gifts*, which were carried to a great extent in pagan Rome, became nationalized in England, assuming a religious character; and, upon the first day of the year truths could, in former days, be communicated even to the monarch, which, at any other time, would have endangered the life of the party. Thus Bishop Latimer is related to have sent, as a new year's gift to Henry VIII., this appropriate present—a New Testament, richly illuminated, with an inscription on its cover—*"Fornicators and Adulterers cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!!!"* A new year's gift, which, provided a bishop Latimer could have been found to present it, might not have been without its use or applicability, in dayslong subsequent to those of the eighth Henry.

FEBRUARY—from Februalis, one of the names of Juno. The second of this month the heathens kept as a festival, on which sacrifices for the souls of their ancestors were offered to Pluto, the infernal deity; the church of England, therefore, perfectly in character, appoints the second of February as a festival day, dedicated—not to Pluto, but to "the purification of the blessed Virgin;" and the church commentators inform us that the peculiar advantage of this festival is its "being the properest and most "necessary season to receive the impression of piety and "virtue;" and they add—impiously add—that "*so it is then most acceptable to God.*"—*Nelson's Companion to the Fasts and Festivals of the Church of England*, p. 129. And thus, through the whole of the calendar, we are prepared to shew that, not merely on the leading festivals of Christmas, Sundays, and Easter, but those of minor character, of which the two just noticed are specimens, are nearly all of heathen original; in proof of which a table will be given, in our concluding Essay.

Among the Northern nations there were three great religious festivals; the first of which was celebrated at the Winter Solstice, and was called by pre-eminence, the "MOTHER NIGHT," it being the longest, and, as they supposed, the

night upon which the world was created. The second was held in honour of the Earth, or the goddess FRIGGA, to request of her pleasures, fruitfulness, and victory. The third, in honour of ODIN, was celebrated at the commencement of spring. But of these the MOTHER NIGHT took the pre-eminence, as from it was dated the commencement of the year, which was computed from one Winter Solstice to the other. It was held as a feast, celebrated in honour of THOR; and, in order to obtain fruitful seasons and a propitious year, sacrifices, feasting, dances, nocturnal assemblies, and all the demonstrations of dissolute joy were then authorized by the Northern nations. The name of this festival was YULE, or JULE; and it is a remarkable fact that this term, or some other springing from it, is even now used in parts of England, and on the continent, as expressive of the "*nativity of Christ*." In Sweden and Norway, particularly, the old word is retained; in France it is converted into Noël; and in our own country, at the present time, Yule tide. The Yule clog, Yule daugh, and other minor Christmas customs, will be adduced in the course of our inquiries, as illustrative of the perfectly heathen character of Christmas, and all its attendant circumstances—ancient or modern. When paganism gave place to what was styled Christianity, the priests tolerated all the ancient pastimes of their converts, and not only authorized a feast at the Winter Solstice, which they changed to the honour of the "Nativity," from that of the pagan god *Thor*, but actually, in this instance, and contrary to their general practice, suffered this feast to retain its original pagan appellation of *Yule tide*, which, says Brady, "by progressive degrees" became synonymous with that of Christmas, though "retained only among the vulgar, who soon forgot its" "primitive signification."—*Calendaria*, vol. 2, p. 345. In conformity with this species of conversion, the old practice in this country of lighting up churches on Christmas eve, was borrowed from a heathen ceremony at *Yule tide*, or the feast of *Thor*, who was typified as the sun; but the fathers managed to represent this practice as the "Light" which was about to be born into the world. In the North of England Yule songs are still sung, whilst elsewhere, in the place of these, the priests substituted others bearing a reference to the nativity, denominating them "Christmas Carols;" some, however, gravely asserted that the angels first introduced the custom of singing these "divine" songs at "*the nativity of our Lord*;" and as this idea may have

arisen from the kind of talent displayed in such productions, in order that they may fairly be compared with poetry of merely a human character, we present a specimen from Davies Gilbert's collection of ancient Christmas Carols,* just published—set to music. Our readers will doubtless lament that we have not added notes of the heavenly strains by which they were accompanied.

I.

A virgin most pure, as the prophets do tell,
Has brought forth a baby as it hath befell,
To be our Redeemer from death, hell, and sin,
Which Adam's transgressions had wrapped us in.

Chorus.

Aye, and therefore be you merry,
Rejoice and be you merry;
Set sorrow aside,
Christ Jesus our Saviour was born on this tide.

II.

In Bethlehem, in Jewry, a city there was,
Where Joseph and Mary together did pass;
And there to be taxed with many a one mo',
For Cæsar commanded the same should be so.

Aye, and therefore be you merry, &c.

III.

But when they had entered the city so fair,
A number of people so mighty was there,
That Joseph and Mary, whose substance was small,
Could find in the inn there no lodging at all.

Aye, and therefore be you merry, &c.

IV.

Then were they constrained in a stable to lye,
Where horses and asses they used for to tie;
Their lodging so simple they took it no scorn,
But against the next morning our Saviour was born.

Aye, and therefore be you merry, &c.

V.

The King of all Kings to this world being brought,
Small store of fine linen to wrap him was sought;
And when she had swaddled her young son so sweet,
Within an ox manger she laid him to sleep.

Aye, and therefore be you merry, &c.

* "Ancient Christmas Carols, with the tunes to which they were formerly sung in the West of England.—Collected by Davies Gilbert, F.R.S. "F.A.S., &c."—Nichols and Son.

VI.

Then God sent an angel from heaven so high,
 To certain poor shepherds in fields where they lye,
 And bade them no longer in sorrow to stay,
 Because that our Saviour was born on this day.

Aye, and therefore be you merry, &c.

VII.

Then presently after the shepherds did spy
 A number of angels that stood in the sky,
 They joyfully talked and sweetly did sing—
 To God be all glory—our heavenly king.

Aye, and therefore be you merry,
 Rejoice and be you merry;
 Set sorrow aside,
 Christ Jesus our Saviour was born on this tide.

On Christmas day these Carols formerly took the place of Psalms in the churches, especially at afternoon service, the whole congregation joining; and at the end the parish clerk declared, in a loud voice, his wishes for a merry Christmas and happy new year to all the assembly.

With the Romans the feast in honour of Saturn was the most esteemed, and during its celebration all classes gave themselves up to mirth and feasting:—friends sent presents to each other; masters treated their slaves upon an equal footing; schools kept holiday; and the senate did not sit. At first it was held but for one day, and that on the 19th December; afterwards for three days; and, by the order of Caligula, for five days; two days were then added, (bringing the ceremonies up to the 26th December) and called "Sigillaria," from small images, which were sent as presents by parents to their children, and may lead to an illustration of our customs on the day of the "holy innocents," which immediately succeeds Christmas day. At the Saturnalia, and at the feast of Bacchus, held about the same season, all restraints were removed from every rank of society, and the whole people wantoned in the indulgence of sensual gratification. Bacchus was represented as a boy, and it is therefore probable that, with a view of preserving to the people their accustomed idea of a child, this period was preferred as the commemoration of the nativity of Jesus; and the whole festive season, with all its impurities—instead of being any longer, as among our ancestors, the feast of YULE, or, as with the Romans, the "SATURNALIA"—was reformed; not in substance, not in manners, or in customs, but in *name* merely; being transformed into a sacred feast, in honour, as was pretended, of the birth of Jesus. The

reasons for those monstrous and blasphemous, though we allow them to be characteristic proceedings, are obvious; transferring, as they did, to a national religious establishment, nearly all the power and profit which could be derived from encouraging, under the sacred name of religion, even the grossest ignorance, and the lowest vices of mankind. We may, therefore, now assume the perfectly heathen original of Christmas; this fact, indeed, is so unquestionable, that we find, in some of the early church writers—not an attempt to deny—but to defend this point; and we find preserved in “Brand’s Popular Antiquities,” a portion of a very rare tract, from which it appears that, in 1648, Thomas Warmesley, D.D. wrote a “*Vindication of the Solemnity of the Nativity of Christ*,” in answer to the following questions: Whether this feast had not its rise and growth from Christians’ conformity to the made feasts of Saturnalia, (kept in December to Saturn the father of the Gods) in which there was a sheaf offered to Ceres goddess of corn, and a hymn to her praise? and, Whether those Christians by name, to cloak it, did not afterwards call it YULE and Christmas, as though it were for Christ’s honour? and, Whether it be not yet called Yule, and the mad plays wherewith ’tis celebrated, like those Saturnalia, are they not our Yule games? and, Whether, from the gifts of the heathens to their friends on the calendar of January, did not arise our new year’s gifts? To these questions the Rev. Doctor, in his “*Vindication of the Solemnity of the Nativity of Christ*,” makes a reply which, like many other replies, tends—not to the refutation—but to the confirmation of the charge. What, he argues, if it should appear that the time of this festival *doth* comply with the time of the heathen Saturnalia, *this leaves no charge of impiety upon it!* “for, since “things are best cured by contraries, it was both *wisdom* “and *piety* in the ancient Christians, whose work it was to “convert the heathen from such, as well as other super- “stitutions and miscarriages, to *vindicate such times from that* “*service of the devil, by appointing the same to the more* “*solemn and especial service of God.*” “Christmas Carols,” he observes, “if used with Christian piety, may be profitable, “if they be sung with grace in the heart! New year’s gifts, “if performed *without superstition*, may be harmless provoca- “tions to Christian love!” As it was the custom to present these gifts to the clergy, and the author of the objections was also a clergyman, he is thus rather acutely advised by the more *prudent* doctor—“Trouble not yourself; if *you* dislike

“ new year’s gifts I would advise your parishioners not to trouble *your conscience* with them, and all will be well again.”

We now proceed to notice some of the customs practised during the Roman Saturnalia, from which it will be apparent that our ancient customs, in common with our *reformed* modern ones, proceed from the same polluted source. At this feast slaves were not merely put by their masters on an equality with themselves, but their masters occasionally waited upon them, honouring them with mock titles, and permitting them to assume their own state and deportment. Even this practice was transferred to our Christmas ceremonies; thus the society belonging to Lincoln’s Inn had anciently an officer who was honoured with the mock title of “ King of Christmas,” because he presided in the hall upon that day: this temporary potentate had a marshall and a steward to attend upon him. Upon Childermas day they had another officer, denominated the “ King of the Cockneys.” The “ King of the Bean,” too, was chosen upon the vigil of the Epiphany; and at the court of Edward III. the king’s title was conferred, during this festive season, upon his majesty’s trumpeter—an exchange, perhaps, that kings might often make with advantage—at least to their subjects; all these transpositions at Christmas being derived, according to Selden, “ from the ancient Saturnalia, or feast of Saturn.” These fooleries were exceedingly popular, being practised in defiance, at first, we are told, of the threatnings and remonstrances of *some* of the clergy; but this *accommodating* class of men, finding it desirable to follow the stream of vulgar prejudice, eventually satisfied themselves with changing merely the titles of their religious ceremonies, so that the same unhallowed orgies which had disgraced the worship of a heathen deity were now dedicated to the service of the true God, and sanctioned by the appellation of Christian rites. From this stock branched out a variety of unseemly and immoral sports, but none of them more outrageous to common sense than the one entitled the “ FESTIVAL OF FOOLS,” which, at the festive seasons, formed a part of “ divine service;” when rites and ceremonies, pretending to be of the most sacred character, were turned into ridicule, the priests themselves supporting their true character by participating in such degrading exhibitions. In each of the cathedral churches there was elected, at such periods, a “ bishop, or archbishop of fools;” (would we could give both them and their clerical successors no worse a character)

and in the churches immediately dependant upon the papal See, a "pope of fools." These mock pontiffs had also a suit of ecclesiastics to attend upon, and assist at, what they impiously called "*divine service*;" and, attired in the dresses of players and buffoons, as was the custom in the heathen *solemnities*, they were accompanied by crowds of the laity, some disguised with masks, and others dressed as females, in which garb they imitated the manners and the behaviour of the lowest and most abandoned classes of society.

During such "*divine service*," this motley group both of clergy and laity being assembled in church, some of them sang indecent songs in the choir; others ate; others drank; others played at dice upon the altar, by the side of the priest whilst celebrating mass. After such "*solemnities*" they ran about the church, leaping, dancing, and exposing themselves in the most unseemly attitudes, as the practice had been in honour of the heathen deities. Another part of the ceremony, in remembrance of the "Nativity of our Lord," but which had been practised under another designation before "our Lord" was born, was to shave the "precentor of fools" upon a stage appropriately erected before the church door; and during the operation his office was to amuse the populace with lewd and vulgar discourses. The "pope of fools" performed "*divine service*," habited (not inappropriately) in the pontifical garments; and, thus attired, gave his benediction to the people. He was afterwards drawn in an open carriage, attended by a train of ecclesiastics and laymen, promiscuously mingled together; and many of the most profligate of the latter assumed (quite correctly in our judgment) clerical habits, in order, says Strutt, to give "their *impious fooleries* *the greater effect*." In the fourteenth century, in England, at this season, we had the king of fools; and the election and investment of the "boy bishop" was clearly derived from the festival of fools—but of these more hereafter: the whole affords a singularly effective comment on the Rev. Doctor's "*Vindication of the Solemnity of the Nativity of Christ*," and well displays "the wisdom and piety of the ancient Christians in *working by contraries*, to convert the heathen from superstition, and vindicate such times, by appointing them to the solemn service of God." But if the "wisdom and piety" of these parties failed in their experiments upon the human species, it would appear that they were more successful with the brute creation. Let the following statement from "*Brand's Popular Antiquities*"

satisfy the most sceptical: "A superstitious notion prevails " in the Western parts of Devonshire, that at twelve o'clock " at night, on Christmas eve, the oxen in their stalls are " always found on their knees, as in an *attitude of devotion*; " and that" (which is still more singular) " since the altera- " tion of the style they continue to do this, only on the " eve of *old* Christmas day. An honest countryman living " on the edge of St. Stephen's Down, in Cornwall, informed " me, October 28, 1790, that he once, with some others, " made a trial of the above; and watching several oxen in " their stalls, at twelve o'clock at night, they observed the " *two oldest oxen only* fall upon their knees," (they were of the high church party we presume*) "*and make a cruel " moan like Christian creatures!!*" There is an old print of the nativity, in which the oxen in the stable, near Jesus and his mother, are actually represented on their knees, and in a suppliant posture!!!

We shall be told that many of the monstrous scenes of depravity, or of folly, which we have related, belonged to times that are long gone by; that they were perversions of institutions in themselves good; and that now a "reasonable " service" supplies the place of our ancient pastimes. We admit that, in their grosser characteristics, the time is gone by for the toleration of such impurities; and doubtless the progress of enlightenment would have entirely dissipated them, had not a religious character been forced upon them. But the religion which adopted them is unchanged; the articles which claimed the right to "decree rites and ceremonies" are still in force; the belief in such is still "a part and parcel " of the law of the land;" the denunciations against those who would expose them, possess even more than their ancient ferocity, and the iniquity of calling *such* institutions, with *such* an original, "Christian," is still continued. But we deny that even the grossest practices recorded, were, in any sense of the word, a "*perversion*" of the original institution of those days; it has been shewn that their institution was not almost—but altogether—of *heathen* original, and that they were not esteemed Christian until kings and priests made them so, and impiously dared to fix them on more enlightened times by giving them a character of piety and

* A friend, who has seen our manuscript, suggests, as more probable, that the younger animals, less regardful of ancient customs, sagaciously observed the *new* stile; a point of ecclesiastical chronology which has divided other— if not wiser heads than those of the calves now in question.

holiness. We are told, in defiance of history and of fact, even by BRADY, in his "*Clavis Calendaria*," "That the "festivals of the Christian church" (that is, not the church of Christ, but that church which is "part and parcel of the law of the land") "were instituted for the most amiable "purposes, to keep up a steady and regular succession of "religious observances." And one of the highest church authorities upon these subjects informs us that the way to keep those 216 *holy days* of the English church, is by setting them apart for the exercise of religious duties, and by abstaining from worldly recreations, as such might hinder our attendance upon the worship of God. Yet a protestant king, James I. no less a personage than the "Defender of "the Faith," and the legal head of this *same church*, at a period not long preceding the authority last quoted "did justly" (to use his own words) "rebuke some puritans and precise people, who had punished our good "people in Lancashire for using their lawful recreations "and honest exercises on Sundays, and other holy days, "after the afternoon sermon; it is our will that, *after divine "service*, our good people be not disturbed from any lawful "recreation, such as dancing, either for men or women; "archery for men; leaping; vaulting; nor for having may-poles; nor Whitsun ales; nor morris dancers and other "sports, SO AS THE SAME BE HAD WITHOUT NEGLECT OF "DIVINE SERVICE."

An exposure of the ignorance, or the folly, of the established church is, however, only incidental; our main object being to prove, as far as such observances can do so, that nearly the whole of the religious bodies of this, and all other "Christian countries," are *Heathen*—not *Christian* establishments; a point which we think may be effectually established by a review and a fair application of the facts above recorded, or adverted to;—for what is it which we see? In the first place we find certain feasts, celebrated with certain observances in honour of heathen deities; thence we follow them to the Roman Catholic Missal, and there find the heathen institutions, sanctioned almost without disguise; from this we proceed to the "Book of Common Prayer, and "Administration of the Sacrament and other Rites and "Ceremonies, according to the use of the Church of "England;" and there we are presented with the Roman Catholic Calendar, the number of the saints certainly rather lessened; but those that remain, having their lessons, collects, &c. unaltered — *unreformed*; thence we

descend to the Methodists, and find them commanded by Mr. Wesley, to observe the ceremonies of the church of England, even down to that of making every Friday in the year a fast day; and we finally trace these heathenish observances in the Unitarian "Book of Common Prayer, the seventh edition, with *additional collects*—1823," being the liturgy, which "is an exact copy of that now used at the chapel, in Essex Street;" in this we discover "The order for morning prayer every *Lord's day* throughout the year; the same to be used with the *proper collects* upon *Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Day, and Whitsunday.*" Upon Christmas day we are presented with a collect addressed to God, "for the '*first coming*' of our Lord Jesus Christ;" upon Good Friday with one which speaks of Jesus as "*this day*" "wishing to be given up into the hands of wicked men;" and upon Easter Sunday with one for "our Lord Jesus Christ," "who had overcome death;" although, in regard to Christmas day, the editor of this very book of *reformed* Common Prayer has himself put upon record, that, apart from the consideration of the heathen original of the festival, it is, in its religious character, founded upon a gross fabrication—that of the two first chapters of Matthew and Luke; and in relation to Easter, we shall shew, in our succeeding number, that it has not even the credit of being a perverted Jewish feast, but is simply a modernized heathen festival, originally kept in honour of Eastre, a Saxon goddess, and afterwards transferred to the Catholic Missal; yet a minister of the Unitarian body can be actually engaged, in common with the Roman catholic priest, thus in imposing upon society, and aiding to degrade a religion which came from the Most High God, and such unholy exertions, we lament to record, would appear to be but too successful; for in the preface to the *seventh edition* of Mr. Belsham's "*reformed*" service, is an announcement that "it was published with the design of inducing other congregations to adopt the same, WHICH PURPOSE HAS SUCCEEDED."

For the present we take our leave of this subject expressing our firm reliance upon the good providence of God; that Christianity—simple, pure, and dignified, as it was taught by Jesus and his apostles—will rise from the corruptions which past and ignorant ages have heaped upon it, and which are yet unhappily preserved by the prejudices of the vulgar, and the false views of *expediency* exhibited by those who lay claim to superior enlightenment!

DISSENTERS' MARRIAGES.

“ You must also take care not to admit of any thing in the celebrating of your marriage, which may be either INCONSISTENT WITH YOUR RELIGION, or contrary to that MODESTY, DECENCY, and SANCTITY, which becomes Christians at all times, and more especially on so sacred and solemn an occasion.”—ROMAN RITUAL. *Instructions and Exhortations on the Solemnization of Matrimony.*

THERE is something so correct, so decent, and so proper in the above exhortation that, although derived from the catholic church, we have not scrupled to place it at the head of this article; and surely, if the corrupt church of Rome has enjoined on her communicants that the consistency of their religious belief, and the decency of their manners, should not be violated in the celebration of their marriages, protestant dissenters may, at least, claim an equal regard for principle, and an equal sense of delicacy.

Upon the grounds both of conscience and of decency, the society by which this Work is conducted have long felt the strongest objections to the marriage ceremony, as performed by the church of England, to which, as dissenters, they are compelled to conform; and they have in consequence used every means in their power to bring their objections before the public and the legislature, that a just and legal remedy might be obtained. Upon the eve, as they trust they may be allowed to feel themselves, of obtaining parliamentary relief, there is no part of their past exertions, in favour of civil and religious liberty, on which they can reflect with more satisfaction than on the efforts they have made (at one time, indeed, singly and alone) to obtain relief in the important particular now under consideration. To submit to the reader the state and history of this question—to exhibit the struggles they have made, and are still making, to obtain for dissenters a legal marriage, without a violation of the rights of conscience, and to excite increased attention among the great body of dissenters to this important subject, are the objects of the present article.

The catholics of England have always regarded it as contrary to their consciences, that they should be compelled, on entering into the marriage state, to submit to a ceremony performed by a church which they esteem to be heretical. But, with the exception of the catholics, the Freethinking Christians for a long time stood alone in their opposition to the marriage ceremony. By exertions shortly to be recorded, they succeeded in bringing the Unitarian body to feel the

question as one strictly connected with the rights of conscience; and they appeal now to dissenters generally, from an anxiety that the importance of this subject should be felt by all who withdraw from the community of the established church.

The Unitarian dissenters object to the marriage ceremony as requiring a subscription to the Trinity; but this, it may be supposed, cannot be felt by the majority of dissenters, who are believers in that doctrine. We may observe, however, that, if the latter fully enter into, and properly appreciate the principles of *dissent*, they will naturally feel it abhorrent to those principles, that any portion of their fellow dissenters should be compelled to subscribe what they disbelieve, as the condition of enjoying a civil right. But, independant of the objections against subscribing to the doctrine of the Trinity, how is it, we may ask, that dissenters, as such, can submit to a popish service?—for the marriage service *is* popish! How is it that those censors of public morals, the dissenters, who are the most conspicuous in their labours to suppress indecent publications, can countenance the marriage ceremony? for it *is* an indecent publication!*

When, indeed, we contemplate the *occasion* and *circumstances* of marriage we cannot too strongly deprecate the introduction of anything inconsistent with the strictest principle and the highest delicacy. A Christian man and woman it may be—a youth of pure mind, and a young female of chaste thoughts meet together, exposed to the public view, and surrounded by their family, their friends, and kindred, to vow a solemn engagement to each other, and to enter on a state of delicate and refined communion; and yet, at such a time, by the intervention of the marriage ceremony, the conscience of each is violated, and their modesty put to open shame!

We have described the English marriage ceremony as a *popish* institution, and protestants should know that the service is derived, in a great measure, from the *popish mass book and ritual*. In justice, however, to the church of Rome, her marriage ceremony, it must be confessed, is almost entirely free from those impurities which are so offensive in

* It does not at all affect the question of the indelicacy of many parts of the marriage service to urge, that at the time in which they were written they were not esteemed to be indelicate—it is sufficient to say they are so felt now; and, particularly when read before young females and children, they are extremely revolting.

the English service; the indecency appears to have been introduced by the *reformed* church, and we confess, if we were compelled by law to submit to either, we should greatly prefer the catholic ceremony, as by far more plain, simple, and pure than that of the established church. The catholics, it is true, hold marriage to be a *sacrament*; but the reformed church appear to us in substance, and in fact, to avow the same sentiment; this will sufficiently appear by comparing the following extracts from the marriage service of the two churches:—

CATHOLIC.

“Matrimony is a holy state, originally instituted by Almighty God, between our first parents (Gen. ii.); ratified and confirmed by the Son of God in the New Testament (Mat. xix. 4, 5, 6.); honoured by his first miracle (John ii.); and raised by him to the dignity of a *sacrament*, as a most holy sign and *mysterious* representation of the indissoluble union of Christ and his church.”

PROTESTANT.

“Matrimony, which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man’s innocency, signifying unto us the *mystical* union, that is betwixt Christ and his church:” and again “O God who hast consecrated the state of matrimony, to such an *excellent mystery*, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his church.”

The two churches agree then, it would appear, in attaching to marriage the mystical notions which were introduced in the darker ages; the catholic ritual calling marriage “a *sacrament*”—a “*great sacrament*;” the protestant ritual denominating it an “*excellent mystery*.” A *sacrament* then being a *mystery*, the two churches meet in perfect concord on this point—the one having its *great*, the other its *excellent mystery*.

Turning to the declaration which the man makes on taking his wife, we observe that, in the catholic ritual, it runs thus: “With this ring I thee wed; this gold and silver I thee give; with my body I thee worship; and with all my worldly goods I thee endow. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” This unmeaning jumble of absurdity, falsehood, and orthodoxy appears, in the view of our reformed church, to have approached so near to perfection, that they have adopted the whole into the English ritual, with the exception of the words “this gold and silver I thee give.” Still, however, the modern bridegroom finds himself wonderfully perplexed by this part of the ceremony. He does not understand the mummery of the ring; he feels scruples at worshipping his wife; and, so far from endowing her with all his worldly goods, *her* property generally passes over to himself. This part of the marriage ceremony affords a striking instance of the folly of retaining obsolete forms of expression, and allusions

to obscure customs, as parts of a religious service, when words have changed their meaning, and the customs referred to are no longer known.

This form of declaration in the marriage service is, it may be observed, of very great antiquity, and is supposed to bear reference to customs of still earlier date. From some passages in the ancient scriptures it appears to have been a custom for the man to purchase the woman; this was also the practice among the Romans, as it still is of some modern nations, particularly among the savage tribes.* In the marriage form extant in the *Salisbury Manual*, a work of great antiquity, the priest is directed, before he proceeds to the marriage, to *ask the woman's dowry*, that is, *the tokens of spousage*; this, it appears, was generally paid at the church door, where the greater part of the marriage ceremony was originally performed, and was thence called "*Dos ad Ostium Ecclesiæ*."—the dowry at the church door.†—See *Wheatly*, Oxford edition, 1819—p. 408 and 425. The ring, it has been suggested, was the ancient *seal* or token of covenant, and was consequently given as a pledge for the payment of the dowry contracted to be paid to the woman; hence some light is thrown on the words "with this ring I thee wed," the term *wed* signifying *covenant*. The ring is directed by the rubric to be placed by the man "upon the fourth finger of the woman's left hand;" this is derived from the direction contained in the *Salisbury Manual*, which represents that there proceeds from that finger a particular vein to the heart; a very excellent reason no doubt for placing the ring on this finger—only that anatomists have discovered that no such vein exists.

As to the promise which the man makes to *worship* his wife, there can be little doubt but that originally the term

* See Gen. xxxiv. 11 and 12. "*And Shechem said unto her father, and unto her brethren, let me find grace in your eyes; and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.*" In Russia when marriage is proposed the lover, accompanied by a friend, goes to the house of the bride; and says to the mother "*shew us your merchandize, we have got money.*" And among the Abiponians the price of a wife varies from a horse to a bottle of brandy.—See *Rees Encyclopedia*.

† The marriage at the church door is alluded to by CHAUCER
"Thanked be God, that is eterne on live

Husbondes at church dore have I hadde five."—*Wife of Bath*.

The custom of giving dowry at the church door throws light upon the words in the Romish ritual—"this gold and silver I thee give"—words which were retained in the early reformed liturgies; and, on using which a purse containing silver and gold was given to the bride.—*Wheatly*.

worship signified *honour*; but the objections to this word in the marriage ceremony are as old as the time of Charles II.; for at the conferences which were held at the Savoy, between the commissioners of the Episcopalians and Presbyterians, for reviewing the liturgy, this word *worship* was, on the representation of the Presbyterian commissioners, promised to be changed for *honour*—a promise that has never been fulfilled.*

To trace the original intent and purport of the form of words we have been examining, would answer little purpose, except, indeed, to raise an inference that as a distant and ignorant age employed in their marriage service words which were to them simple, intelligible, and founded on existing customs, so, in the present age of encreased light and knowledge, we ought to exhibit, at least, an equal consistency. And this is a subject, as we think, important to all serious persons of all persuasions; for even the communicant of the church of England must, as we apprehend, feel many difficulties and scruples in joining in the present marriage service. Of the popish origin and character of this service—of its obscurity and unfitness to our own times and manners—other instances might be given; of the indelicacy of some parts of this service our sense of what is due to public morals will restrain us from offering evidence; we proceed, therefore, to an examination of the history and laws of marriage.

In tracing the history, and examining the laws of marriage in this country, it appears that the English law regards marriage as a civil contract, upon which principle it is that the holiness of the marriage state, the punishment of adultery, &c. are left entirely to the ecclesiastical law.† Pope Innocent III., it has been said, was the first who ordered the celebration of marriage in the church, before which it was, in England, entirely a civil contract; the ceremony of marriage, if such it might be called, consisting

* See Wheatly and the Papers that passed between the Commissioners, &c.

† "Our law (says Blackstone) considers marriage in no other light than as a civil contract. The holiness of the matrimonial state, is left entirely to the ecclesiastical law—the temporal courts not having jurisdiction to consider unlawful marriage as a sin, but merely as a civil inconvenience. The punishment, therefore, or annulling of incestuous or other unscriptural marriages is the province of the spiritual courts, which act *pro salute animæ*. And taking it in this civil light the law treats it as it does all other contracts: allowing it to be good and valid in all cases where the parties, at the time of making it were in the first place *willing* to contract; secondly, *able* to contract; and lastly actually *did* contract, in the proper forms and solemnities required by law."—15 chap. book 1.

merely in the bridegroom going to the bride's house and publicly carrying her to his own. (Moore's Reports.) And even in those states more immediately under the controul of the court of Rome, it appears doubtful whether marriage was ever solemnized by a minister of the church before the eighth century. Mr. Selden says it was sometimes done by the choice of the contracting parties, but he asserts they were under no obligation of law to do so, "nor did any custom prevail so as to give it the title of a general custom." But Broughton, in his *Bibliotheca Historica Sacra*, informs us that "afterwards, about the eighth and ninth centuries, some of the more zealous emperors made express laws, prohibiting all marriages without the *benediction* of the church." (Vol. 2, 180.) And Pope Innocent III., by *compelling* the marriage to be performed in the church, completed what had thus been begun by Christian emperors, falsely so called. This corrupt and ambitious pontiff filled the papal chair at the commencement of the thirteenth century; he established in the church the sacraments of *Transubstantiation* and of *Auricular Confession*;* and it is not improbable that marriage was introduced by him as a religious ceremony or sacrament into the church, in order to increase the power, and add to the revenues of the clergy. At about this period (1222) Otho, the pope's legate in this country, convoked a national synod at St. Paul's church, London; at which synod a canon was passed, decreeing that the number of sacraments should be fixed at seven,† in which number *marriage* was then, for the first time, included as a sacrament. From this period, as the power of the church, and the ignorance of the age increased, marriage became to be considered as a mystical rite by the people, although it was still held, by the English law, as a civil contract, "the intervention of a priest to solemnize this contract being merely *juris positivi*, and not *juris naturalis aut divini*." (Blackstone.) Still, however, in England, as it is in Scotland at this day, any contract made between the man and the woman to live together, was deemed a valid marriage to many purposes, and continued to be so held in law up to the period of passing the marriage act 26 Geo. II. In the times of Cromwell marriages were performed before the justices of the peace, the enactment which was passed in the year 1653, being as follows:—

"That all persons intending to be married shall come before some Justice of the Peace; and, if there appear no reasonable cause to the

* Mosheim, vol. iii. p. 243.

† Smollett, vol. iii. p. 86.

contrary, the marriage shall proceed in this manner:—The man to be married taking the woman by the hand shall plainly and distinctly pronounce these words—I, A. B. do, in the presence of God the searcher of all hearts, take thee C. D. for my wedded wife; and do also, in the presence of God and before these witnesses, promise to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband.—The woman promises in the same form to be a loving faithful and obedient wife. And it is further enacted, that the man and woman having made sufficient proof of the consent of their parents and guardians (if under the age of twenty-one years); and, expressing their consent unto marriage in the manner and by the words aforesaid before such justice, in the presence of two or more credible witnesses, the said justice may and shall declare the said man and woman to be thenceforward husband and wife, and the marriage shall be good and effectual in law.”

The mode of carrying this act into effect is exhibited by the following curious extract from the Register of St. Mary, Whitechapel:—

“Publications and marriages in December 26, 1653.—Julius Wood of Nightingale Lane, in this parish, Mariner, and Martha Waggon of the same, Widow, were published in the market place of Leaden-hall, three several market days, in three several weeks (viz.) on the 16th day, on the 19th day, and on the 26th day of December 1653; and the said Julius Wood and Martha Waggon were married by me Richard Loton, Esq. and justice of peace in the county of Middlesex, on the 26th day of December, 1653. Edward Callis and Tobias Harborough, witnesses, present.

Some marriages are described in the same register as “published at the *publicke meeting place*, commonly called Mary Whitechapel Church.”

This was called “being married by the directory,” and it is curious to observe the vicissitudes of those forms of religion which have no other sanction than act of parliament; for it appears that in the above year, being the first of the protectorate, and the *liturgy* not being then repealed, one Stephen Marshal, in order, at all events, to make the marriage of his daughter secure, had her married “by the *form prescribed in the liturgy*, and paid five pounds to the churchwardens of the parish, as the *fine or forfeiture* for “using any other form of marriage than in the directory.”—See *Heylen's Examen Historicum*, as quoted in “*Thelyphthora*; or, a Treatise on Female Ruin,” vol. 3—1781.

At the restoration it is important to note that by 12 Car. II., c. 33. all marriages celebrated by the justices were declared legal *without any fresh solemnization*. Still, however, the necessity of this declaration demonstrates that marriage was regarded by the canon law as incomplete without a religious solemnization; and it was to protect the parties against the penalties and disabilities that might arise in the ecclesiastical courts that this act was passed. The canon and the common law, it may be observed, are essentially, and in practice, jealous of each other; but even the canon law

regards marriage as a civil contract, as the ecclesiastical courts cannot *void* a marriage that has been entered into without a religious solemnization, but can only punish the parties for not solemnizing the marriage agreeably to the forms of law; but the courts of common law have never ruled that the religious ceremony, which the ecclesiastical courts claim to be so indispensable, is essential to the general validity of marriage. The canon law, is by no means of equal authority with the common law of England; for, at the commencement of the reformation, it was enacted in parliament that this monstrous and anomalous collection of church law—the canons—should be reviewed; and that, till such review should be made, all canons, constitutions, ordinances, and synodals provincial, being then already made, and *not repugnant to the law of the land*, or the king's prerogative, should still be used and executed. Now, as this review has never taken place, it is upon this *statute only*, and to the extent therein expressed, that the authority of the canon law depends.*

The restoration of Charles II., with whom also the *liturgy* was restored, would naturally expose the Quakers to inconvenience with regard to marriage, as they claimed and exercised the right of entering into marriage before their own meetings, and without any religious ceremony. The opinion of Judge Hale, upon these marriages, we have recorded by a learned cotemporary, Bishop Burnet; this opinion will not be suspected of being the result of any undue partiality towards the dissenters in the breast of the judge, when the reader is reminded that, in his celebrated "Letter to his "Children," Judge Hale warns them not to keep company

* The canons are derived from the *Romish church*—and it might have been expected that the inconsistency of this church, with regard to marriage, would have caused the reformed church to pause, before such an authority had been admitted on such a subject; for although, at the commencement of the thirteenth century, marriage was held by the church of Rome to be a sacrament, it had been previously regarded as little short of a crime, when a life of *celibacy* was esteemed a necessary evidence of superior piety:—And it is stated in *Bogue and Bennet's History of Dissenters*, vol. 1, p. 15, that "In the seventh century Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury, was celebrated through all the Western church for writing a *penitential*, or treatise, to direct what penance should be enjoined for certain crimes: among other matters persons *newly married* were commanded to abstain from *entering a church* for thirty days, and to REPEAT FOR FIFTEEN!" Mosheim assigns to this prelate the credit of having "reduced to a regular science that branch of ecclesiastical law which is known by the name of *penitential discipline*."—*Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2, p. 15.

with *heretics*—such as *Quakers, Anabaptists, &c.*; these prejudices, however, did not sway him when on the judgment seat, as will best appear in Burnet's own words:—

“He was a devout Christian, a sincere protestant, and a true son of the church of England; moderate towards dissenters, and just even to those from whom he differed most; which appeared signally in the care he took of preserving the Quakers from that mischief that was like to fall on them by declaring their marriages void, and so bastarding their children; but he considered *marriage and succession a right of nature*, from which none ought to be barred, what mistake soever they might be under, in the points of revealed religion. And, therefore, in a trial that was before him, when a Quaker was sued for some debts owing by his wife before he married her, and the Quaker's counsel pretended that it was no marriage that had passed between them, since it was not solemnized according to the rules of the church of England, he declared he was not willing, on his own opinion, to make their children bastards, and gave directions to the jury to find it special. It was a reflection on the whole party, that one of them, to avoid an inconvenience he had fallen in, thought to have preserved himself, by a defence that, if it had been allowed in law, must have made their whole issue bastards, and incapable of succession; and for all their pretended friendship for one another, if this judge had not been more their *friend* than one of those they so called—their posterity had been little obliged to them. But he governed himself, indeed, by the law of the gospel—of *doing to others what he would have others do to him*; and therefore, because he would have thought it a hardship, not without cruelty, if, among papists, all marriages were nulled which had not been made with all the ceremonies in the Roman ritual; so he, applying this to the case of the sectaries, thought all marriages made according to the several persuasions of men, OUGHT TO HAVE THEIR EFFECTS IN LAW.”—Burnet's “*Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale, Knight*,” “*Lord Chief Justice of England, with Richard Baxter's additional notes*.”—London, 1805, p. 76, 77.

The above quotation exhibits the opinion of one of the most eminent judges and lawyers of his age, upon the validity of a class of marriages, more free than any other from all *religious ceremony*; the soundness of this opinion is confirmed by the fact that the Quaker marriages are now held good in law, *although, since the days of Judge Hale, no statute has been passed which declares them to be so*. Nor should it escape observation that this opinion, which militates so much against the claim of the established church to force her marriage ceremony upon those who dissent from her communion, is recorded and approved by a bishop of that church, and one of her most distinguished ornaments!

Directing our attention to the period more immediately preceding the passing of the Marriage Act, usually known as *Lord Hardwick's Act*, we may observe that the reformation, although it had declared marriage no longer to rank among the number of the sacraments of the church, had not disturbed those mystical notions which had been asso-

ciated in the public mind, with the supposed sacred rite of marriage; hence the civil contract of marriage became to be regarded as of little importance; and, as late as the middle of the last century, marriage was, by many writers, maintained to be that solemn and religious contract which, being instituted by the church, was above all law, and which the law should neither direct nor controul. Regarded thus by the people as a religious contract, and by some, indeed, as a mere civil act, marriages were easily celebrated, and were held by the courts to be valid, whether performed by the clergyman, or the dissenting minister—in the church, or the meeting-house. This liberty of being married before their own congregations, and agreeably to their own forms, there can be no question, was possessed by dissenters up to the time of passing the marriage act 26 Geo. II., c. 33, in the year 1753. The toleration act, it may also be observed, which passed in the year 1689, must further have confirmed this right by legalizing the meetings and the religious teachers of dissenters.

There are also reported cases in the law books which indicate the fact that marriage, was practised before the congregations of dissenters, Anabaptists, Sabbatarians, &c.;* but this point is sufficiently recognized in the debate which accompanied the passing the Marriage Act. Lord Barrington, in his speech delivered in the House of Commons, in defence of the bill, in order to rebut the charge of innovation which had been made against it, held this language: "Now, Sir, if gentlemen will but attend to the laws we have now in being, they must see that all these things have been by them already, in a great measure, taken care of. No marriage can be good unless it has been solemnized according to *THAT religious ceremony* prescribed by that sect of religion to which the contracting parties belong."—Hansard's Parliamentary History, vol. 15, p. 25.

That dissenters, therefore, possessed the lawful right of marrying agreeably to their own forms there can be no

* *Hutchinson and Wife v. Broosbank*, 3 Levinz, 376.—Wigmore's case; Salkeld 438—Lord C. J. Holt's opinion upon the latter case is thus recorded: "By the canon law a contract *per verba de presenti* is a marriage, as, *I take you to be my wife*. So it is a contract, *per verba de futuro*, viz. *I will take, &c.* If the contract be executed, and he does take her, it is a marriage, and they cannot punish for fornication; but only for not solemnizing the marriage according to the forms prescribed by law, but not so as to declare the marriage void." See also the cases ably stated and explained by a writer in the *Monthly Repository*, vol. 14, p. 174.

doubt; as, however, some vexatious attempts had been made in the ecclesiastical courts to disturb some marriages which had been celebrated in this manner, the generality of dissenters were induced to prefer to be married agreeably to the church ceremony, which they could the more readily conform to, few of them differing, at that time, from any point of doctrine expressed therein; the Unitarian dissenters, indeed, being then so few in number, in England, as not to have a single place of worship in which to perform marriage, if they had been so disposed. Still, however, it is of singular importance to our argument to bear in mind, **FIRST**, that at the time of passing the Marriage Act the Quakers did *not* conform to the marriage ceremony; and **SECOND**, that they did not *then*, nor do they *now*, possess the right of marrying at their own meetings, and agreeably to their own forms, by any statute or enactment that has ever been passed with regard to them. They exercised this right upon the common law and practice of the realm, and the marriage act did not *give* them this right, it only left them in the *same situation* in which they stood previous to its enactment! This important point being borne in mind we shall proceed to show that the MARRIAGE ACT, to which dissenters date the inconvenience of which they complain, was *never intended to abridge their religious rights and privileges*. We admit, indeed, that *incidentally* the Marriage Act *has* abridged the rights of dissenters with regard to the celebration of marriage; but, in order to prove that such was not the object and intention of the act—that, in fact, it had no religious bearing whatever, we shall exhibit to the reader the *circumstances* out of which that act arose, and the *reasons* assigned, by its supporters in parliament, for its introduction. The act in question, the 26 Geo. II., is entitled “An Act for the “better preventing of *Clandestine* Marriages.” Now these clandestine marriages bore reference chiefly to the *fleet* marriages, as they were called, the history of which we shall shortly exhibit to the reader. These *clandestine* marriages, it was also contended, were *illegal* marriages, *not* because they were not performed in the established church, or by one of its ministers, but because they were performed *secretly*, and without that publicity by the proclamation of banns, &c., which the law had wisely directed. Now the penalty for celebrating *clandestine* marriages, in other words marriages without sufficient and legal publication, and proper witnesses thereto, attached only to the minister. Hence, then, by an abuse of the laws, law and

disreputable priests, who had nothing to lose, were enabled to set the laws at defiance; and, by celebrating marriages in prisons, or the rules of prisons in which they might be confined for debt, they were beyond the reach of its penalties, the celebration of marriage *without* the publication of banns not being then a transportable offence. As young people, on an occasion such as marriage, would naturally give the preference to a private celebration, the multitude were found to flock to the Fleet parsons, where the marriages were more private, and less expensive, than marriages performed in a public church or chapel; and from the vulgar prejudice of regarding marriage as a *religious institution*, it was concluded that, to render such institution binding, it was necessary only that it should be performed by a *priest*, without regard to the obligations of the law—a rational conclusion if the premises had been correct. By this means a door became opened for the celebration of improvident and improper marriages, and abuses in consequence resulted to an almost incredible extent, entailing upon families misery and want, and engendering evils which it would be almost impossible to detail. To such a height did these evils proceed that many persons appear to have made it a trade to go about entrapping minors, young men or women of family or fortune, into the most improvident marriages, with worthless prostitutes or profligates, which were celebrated by some scoundrel in “holy orders,” at May Fair, or the Fleet; and the validity of which, whether maintained or set aside, would equally produce the most disastrous consequences. One *Keith*, who had a little chapel in the Fleet prison, appears to have commanded an amazing trade in the matrimonial line; this fellow, in one year, it appears, celebrated 6,000 marriages; whilst his brother clergyman, the rector of St. Ann’s, a large and populous parish, had performed only fifty marriages in the same period!* We hope we shall not be suspected of being prompted, by our objections to a regular clergy, to speak slightly of these reverend personages who tenanted the Fleet; let the reader take the picture of one such as drawn by the Earl of Hillsborough, in the debate on the Marriage Act, in 1753. It had been contended, on the other side, that the people considered there was something of that peculiar and sacred

* See Mr. Robert Nugent’s *Speech on the Clandestine Marriage Bill*. *Parliamentary History*, vol. 15, p. 19.

character in the marriage ceremony, which the new law would set aside, when his lordship replied "Does he think that they" (the people) "can believe that there is any thing sacred in a ceremony performed in a *little room of an ale house*, in the Fleet, and by a *profligate clergyman*, whom they see all in rags, swearing like a trooper, and higgling about what he is to have for his trouble, and half drunk, perhaps, at the very time he is performing the ceremony?"—*Hansard's Parliamentary History*, vol. 15, p. 63.

These scenes, which this act was designed to suppress, are thus represented by a cotemporary writer, Sir Tanfield Leman, in the preface of his Letter to the Earl of Holderness: "In one of the most frequented parts of this great city every second or third house was devoted to this abuse of matrimony—that this shameful business was not transacted privately, but *signs* publicly hung out denoting these offices of destruction, and worriers employed to seduce unwary passengers with '*Do you want a parson?*' or '*Will you be married?*' Questions not less common in these places than to be teased in Monmouth Street with '*Will you buy any clothes.*'" Over the doors also, it appears, of many of these houses, the trade was expressed in the tasteful and elegant terms of "*marriages done here.*" In a collection of pamphlets on the Marriage Act, which is preserved in the London Institution, there is a curious tract written by Keith himself, in 1753; in which the reverend gentleman at once admits and defends these irregularities. Some extracts from this pamphlet we have subjoined in a note, for the benefit of the curious reader; as, besides illustrating our subject, they prove also that the reverend actor in these scenes of disorder was strictly *loyal* and *orthodox*—a thorough church and king man—and devotedly attached to the House of Brunswick, and the protestant succession!*

* The pamphlet is graced with a cut of the reverend gentleman in full canonicals: the motto—"I have fought with beasts at Ephesus." It commences thus: "The reader will excuse me in saying that this act was fashioned with a pure design of obstructing the *glorious method* I have taken of serving my country: if this had not been the case why were not *Flete marriages*" (or, as they are often called, clandestine marriages) "many years ago, before I came into life, abolished?" In a note there is the following remark on the act then pending: "The act does not provide for the incapacities of the married persons not knowing how to write, either by setting their mark or otherwise. Query.—Whether the marriage is to be null if the parties cannot write, which has been the case of many hundred I have married, and some

The evils, then, that had resulted from marriages performed by such persons, and in such a manner, produced the act in question. This act we may distinctly and safely assert had no other object in view than to prevent the following evils:—

Clandestine marriages,

The difficulty of proving marriages,

The difficulty of determining the legitimacy of children, and

The frequency of bigamy.

Now the Marriage Act struck at the root of all these evils, by enacting that “Whereas many persons do solemnize matrimony in prisons, and other places, *without publication of banns*, or licence of marriage, first had and obtained—*for the prevention thereof*; be it enacted, that if any person shall, from and after, &c. solemnize matrimony in any other place than a church, or public chapel, where banns have been usually published, unless by special licence, &c. or shall solemnize matrimony *without publication*, &c. they shall be deemed and adjudged to be guilty of felony, and shall be transported to some of his majesty’s plantations in America,” &c. And it further provided that all marriages

that hardly could speak; yet I could perceive by the smiles they bestowed one on the other, that they consented, and I imagined that they had as great a right to the privilege of marriage as any one who could do both.” Upon the delay that the new law would occasion in marriage, he remarks “Happy is the wooing that is not long a doing, is an old proverb, and a very true one; but we shall have no occasion for it after the 25th day of March next, when we are commanded to read it backwards: and from that period (fatal, indeed, to old England) we must date the declension of the number of the inhabitants of old England.” After recording various instances of sudden and hasty marriages among the lower classes, such as sailors going by dozens to the Fleet, to be married to women whom they had not known for an hour before, he draws this inference:—“It therefore follows that hasty and precipitant marriages (falsely and artfully called clandestine) is the very foundation of our present happiness and prosperity; and time—and a very short time—will shew us that wise, and prudent, and considerate marriages (there will be so few) among the lower classes of the people will be the destruction—both of our church and king, by giving the enemies of Great Britain an opportunity, when they perceive our weakness in numbers, of introducing a POPISH PRETENDER—*Which heaven avert!*” By the conclusion of the pamphlet it would seem that this staunch advocate of church and king was not without a glimpse of his own immortality! “Now, if the present act, in the form it now stands, should, which I am sure is impossible, be of service to my country, I shall then have the satisfaction of having been the occasion of it, because the compilers thereof have done it with a pure design of suppressing MY CHAPEL, which makes me the most celebrated man in this kingdom, though not the greatest.”

should be celebrated in the presence of two witnesses at least, and that the church and chapelwardens should provide books ruled, &c. as described in the act, in which the registry of all marriages, and the attestation thereof, should be preserved. These enactments, the reader will readily perceive, were exactly and solely aimed at the existing evils, and well calculated to remove them. Whilst then such were the objects which the Marriage Act *did* seek to effect, we take it to be clear also that any interference with the religious rights of dissenters it *did not* seek to effect; for as dissenters generally had, as we have already seen by this time, conformed, of choice, to the form of marriage as practised in the church, the only sects who had not so conformed—the Jews and Quakers—were exempted from the operation of the bill; and their marriages we have before stated, and we here more distinctly assert, **STAND NOW ON PRECISELY THE SAME LEGAL GROUNDS AS DID THE MARRIAGES OF ALL DISSENTERS AND NON-CONFORMISTS, CELEBRATED AMONG THEIR OWN CONGREGATIONS, BEFORE THE PASSING OF THE MARRIAGE ACT.**

The express object and design of the Marriage Act is of so much importance to the question now under consideration, that we apprehend that whatever throws light thereon cannot be deemed superfluous. With this view, and to prove that it was never designed to establish a ceremony contrary to the conscientious scruples of any who might be called upon to submit to it, we insert part of the speech of the Attorney-General, (Ryder) on moving in the House of Commons that this bill be committed. This gentleman, in a clear and lucid speech, exhibiting the necessity and policy of the measure, and explaining the various provisions of the bill, concluded thus: “This, Sir, is the substance of the bill now
“ under our consideration, which I thought myself obliged
“ to open to the house, as some gentlemen may not, as yet,
“ have had an opportunity to read it with attention; and
“ from the short account I have given of it, I believe every
“ Gentleman will see that a method has now, at last, been
“ found out *to prevent effectually all clandestine marriages,*
“ *and all the mischievous consequences flowing from them,*
“ without inflicting any penalties upon the innocent, or any
“ more severe penalties upon the guilty than every man will
“ think they deserve. And *I think there is no ceremony or*
“ *solemnity required by this bill,* but what is **ABSOLUTELY**
“ **NECESSARY FOR ASCERTAINING THE MARRIAGE, AND**
“ **RENDERING IT PUBLIC,** which every marriage ought to

“ be; and for guarding against the many artful contrivances “ set on foot to seduce young gentlemen and ladies of “ fortune, and to draw them into improper, perhaps infamous, “ marriages.”—*Hansard's Parliamentary Hist.* vol. 15, p. 11.

Now it is sufficiently apparent that the marriage ceremony, according to the rubric of the church of England, *was* a ceremony, or solemnity, required by the bill, which was *not* “ absolutely necessary for ascertaining the marriage, and “ rendering it public ;” * but it is equally apparent that the inconvenience of this ceremony to any classes of his majesty's subjects, (except Jews and Quakers, who, as we have seen, are exempted from its operation) was never anticipated. It is not at all improbable that the circumstances under which this bill was carried through parliament, might have contributed to the defect in question; for it is extremely to be regretted that so important an enactment should have been made a party measure, and that it should have been *hurried* through parliament, and passed into a law, more, indeed, out of respect, as it should seem, to the minister, than to the measure; for it appears pretty apparent that many of the ministerial members were averse to the bill, and staid away from the house that they might not be called upon to vote. This bill, though it had been drawn by the judges, was sent down to the Commons so full of imperfections, as to compel them, in consequence, to make so many alterations therein, that when it was urged that the house should pass it out of respect to those who had framed it, Mr. H. Fox, Secretary of War, (afterwards Lord Holland) ridiculed the idea by stating that it was, in fact, “ quite a new bill. There is not “ so much as one clause—hardly, indeed, a sentence—that “ stands the same as it was in the bill sent down to us from “ the other house; and besides there have been no less than “ six or seven new clauses added; but this I need not tell “ you, Sir, I shall shew it; for it may most properly be said “ that it appears *prima facie*.”—*Hansard*, vol. 15, p. 67.

* It is gratifying to find ourselves supported in this view of the question by an authority from which support might least have been expected. “ The New Times ” Journal, edited by a Doctor of the Civil Law, made the following observation, on remarking last year upon Mr. Smith's motion for relief. “ Among the means adopted by the Marriage Act to prevent Claudestine Marriages, the principal is to compel all persons in England, except *Jews* and *Quakers*, to be married according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. Now this was a provision in no degree necessary to prevent minors from being married clandestinely. It might tend to produce that effect; but so might *five thousand other measures which it is easy to devise*.”

Here Mr. Fox is represented to have held up the bill with all the additions, alterations, and erasures it had sustained; and, to the infinite amusement of the house, to have pronounced a parody on Anthony's oration over the mangled body of Cæsar.—*Debrett*, vol. 3, p. 180.

The bill, notwithstanding the opposition thus made to it in parliament, finally passed; but, although its objects were, as we incline to believe, beneficial, it was so unpopular at first with the public, that, like a more recent marriage bill, the people deserted the churches when it was first read to them; and, as appears from a public journal, the shop of Parson Keith was crowded with customers down to the last hour that he was allowed by law to keep it open. "Sunday, 24, being the last day before the commencement of the Marriage Act, before eleven o'clock *forty-five* couple were married at Mr. Keith's chapel; and when they ceased near *one hundred pair* had been joined together, two men being constantly and closely employed in filling up licences for that purpose."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 24, p. 141.

By a letter from the Honourable Horace Walpole to the Honourable Henry Seymour Conway, which will be found in the Walpole Papers, and which we have inserted below, the reader will derive a lively impression of the progress of this bill through the lower house of parliament.*

* "Strawberry Hill, May 24, 1753.—It is well you are married. How would my Lady A — have liked to be asked in a parish church, for three Sundays running? I really believe she would have worn her weeds for ever, rather than have passed through so impudent a ceremony! What do you think? But you will want to know the interpretation of this preamble. Why—there is a new bill, which, under the notion of clandestine marriages, has made such a general rummage and reform in the office of matrimony that every Strephon and Chloe—every Dowager and her———will have as many impediments and formalities to undergo as a treaty of peace. Lord Bath invented this bill, but had drawn it so ill that the Chancellor (Lord Hardwick) was forced to draw a new one; and then grew so fond of his own creature that he has crammed it down the throats of both houses, though they gave many a gulp before they could swallow it. The Duke of Bedford attacked it first with great spirit and mastery, but had little support, though the Duke of Newcastle did not vote. The lawyers were all ordered to nurse it through the house; but, except the poor Attorney General, (Sir Dudley Ryder) who is nurse, indeed, to all intents and purposes, and did amply gossip over it—not one of them said a word. Nugent shone extremely in opposition to the bill, and, though every now and then on the precipice of absurdity, kept clear of it with great humour, and wit, and argument, and was unanswered. Yet we were beat. Last Monday it came into the committee, Charles Townshend acted a very good speech, with great cleverness, and drew a picture of his own story and his father's tyranny, with, at least, as much pats as modesty. Mr. Fox mumbled the chancellor and his

It appears also that the amendments and alterations that had been produced in this bill by the opposition, were designed to defeat its adoption when returned to the Lords; this object, however, failed, as the Lords, in order to out-manceuvre the tactics of the opposition in the lower house, consented to pass the bill, even though it appeared before them like Banquo's ghost, with twenty mortal murders on its head. That such was their policy we collect from the testimony of an eye witness, the Rev. Dr. Birch, who had attended the House of Lords to watch the fate of the bill; and who, in a letter to the Honourable Philip York, preserved in the Hardwick Papers, reports—"My Lord Chancellor then rose, "and began a most spirited speech of near three quarters of "an hour, with declaring his concurrence to all the amend- "ments, though some of them evidently weakened the bill, "as sent down from that house, since the substance of it "was of so much moment to the nation, and these *defects* "might be supplied by a subsequent one. He hoped their "lordships would act as their predecessors had done in the "case of the act of succession, under King William, (if he "might compare great things with small) when the Commons, "who were generally thought ill affected to it, clogged it with "so many unpracticable limitations, in order to prevent their "lordships from passing it; who, on the other hand, wisely "consented to the whole for the sake of securing the "succession itself, resolving to wait for *some future oppor-* "tunity to retrench the exceptionable clauses connected with it."

Unfortunately for the dissenters of England, although these observations were delivered seventy years ago, the future opportunity for retrenching the exceptionable clauses connected with the marriage bill has never yet arrived. True it is that the inconvenience of *one* of the clauses of this bill to the dissenters was *not* foreseen, for we have examined carefully all the records of the debates upon this bill in parliament, as well as the discussions to which it gave rise out of parliament, and, with the exception of the clause granting relief

lawyers, and pinned the plan of the bill upon a pamphlet he had found of Dr. Gally's, where the doctor, recommending the French scheme of matrimony, says 'It was found that fathers were too apt to forgive.' 'The gospel,' I thought, said Mr. Fox, 'enjoined forgiveness, but pious Dr. Gally thinks 'fathers are too apt to forgive.' Mr. Pelham, extremely in his opinion against the bill, and in his inclination too, was forced to rivet it; and, without *speaking* one word for it, taught the house to *vote* for it, and it was carried against the chairman's leaving the chair, by 165 to 84."

from the operation of the bill to Jews and Quakers, we can find no trace of this point ever having come into discussion.* But, as it appears there were many known and admitted imperfections in this bill, it may reasonably be supposed that there were others unknown, and not anticipated, when it passed into a law.†

We have shown, satisfactorily, we trust, that it was never the object of the Legislature, in passing the marriage law, to expose dissenters to civil disabilities, or to impose upon them a ceremony in violation of their consciences. That, at the time of passing this act, the dissenters should not themselves have been alive to the inconvenience to which it exposed them, need excite little surprise, when it is

* Doctors Gally, Tunstall, Stebbing, and Ibbetson; Sir T. Leman; Joseph Sayer, Esq. and also various anonymous writers published their sentiments upon the marriage law, between the years 1750 and 1755.

† An instance of this description will sufficiently illustrate our meaning: The Marriage Act had declared that all marriages, to be legal, must be published by banns "in the parish church, or in some public chapel, in which public chapel banns of matrimony have been usually published." Twenty-eight years after, by a decision in the Court of King's Bench, upon a pauper case, it was ruled that all marriages, the banns of which had been published in churches, or chapels, *not existing* at the time of passing the act, were illegal. Upon which alarming decision Lord Beauchamp brought in a bill "To remedy certain inconveniences in the Marriage Act." Upon the debate in the lower house, Mr. Fox, (Charles) who appears to have possessed an hereditary opposition to the Marriage Act, having discovered that the clergymen who had celebrated marriage in any of the new churches, or chapels, were liable to the pains and penalties described in the act, sarcastically remarked—"There was also another provision in the act that required explanation; and, if the noble lord had not taken notice of it in his bill, the omission would certainly be supplied; for all persons who had solemnized marriages in any of these new chapels were, at present, liable to transportation. Under danger of that penalty stood, at present, a vast number of clergymen, and some prelates, in the upper house; but, as *America would not receive them*, they must go to the *Justitia hulk*, which, to be sure, would be a terrible thing; and he hoped the house would interfere to save these reverend—and right reverend—gentlemen from so horrid a fate. It was an absolute fact that several, if not all, of the bishops had transgressed in this way; and, by the bye, the house might have the mortification to see *bishops in their lawn sleeves, instead of preaching the word, heaving ballast on the Thames.*" And here, perhaps, it may not be impertinent to the argument to remark that, like the new churches and chapels that had sprung up since the passing the Marriage Act, so are the new opinions and principles of religious liberty and dissent; neither the one nor the other having been contemplated by the framers of the act. Far be it from us to pursue the comparison further, or to insinuate that the consequences of the latter, to the bishops and clergy, may be the same as Mr. Fox had apprehended in the instance of the former!

considered how few were the numbers of dissenters who, at that time, disbelieved the doctrine of the Trinity; and that, until within a very few years, even the most enlightened Unitarians were found to conform to the marriage ceremony without scruple or objection. It is *time*, in fact—it is the progress of knowledge, and a better understanding of the principles of *dissent*—which have chiefly produced the difficulty of which we complain. The first occasion on which we are enabled to discover that the injustice of the Marriage Act to Unitarian dissenters, had caught the attention of any parliamentary speaker, is in the year 1792, when Mr. Fox, on a motion for leave to bring in a bill for relief of Unitarians, is reported to have expressed himself as follows: “And here he could not help taking notice also
 “ of the Marriage Act—an act to which he was radically so
 “ much an enemy, that he should, whenever he had the
 “ least encouragement, make a *third* attempt to obtain its
 “ repeal. He had made two, and had succeeded in that
 “ house, but had always been thwarted in the House of
 “ Lords. The day, he hoped, would arrive when he should
 “ have better fortune with their lordships. The Marriage
 “ Act it was his wish to alter in that part which provided
 “ an exemption *only* for Jews and Quakers. The necessity
 “ of a *more ample exemption* he proved from the case of
 “ two women, confined in Nottingham jail, for non-compli-
 “ ance with the provisions of the Marriage Act. In short he
 “ declared it to be his wish to *extirpate heresy by the old*
 “ *method of fire*; not, however, by burning victims, but by
 “ *BURNING THE VARIOUS NOXIOUS ACTS!*”—*Parliamentary History*, vol. 29, p. 1380.

We trust that we have sufficiently established our view of the Marriage Act—namely, that it was never designed to disturb the religious rights of any sect or party; we may briefly add, that the truth of our position is confirmed by the circumstance that Scotland was exempted from the act, all sects then, as now, being allowed to marry agreeably to their own forms; and further, that, when the inconvenience of the Marriage Act was felt in Ireland, a law was passed by the Irish parliament, enabling dissenters to marry before their own congregations. This, then, is our case—as protestant dissenters, we claim that which, even if we had never possessed, we should demand to be granted to us! but which having possessed we claim to be restored to us! Nor can we better express our views on the subject of marriage; or better, perhaps, conclude this division of our subject, than

in the words of one of our greatest modern law authorities, LORD REDESDALE; who, in the debate on the marriage bill, in the House of Lords, at the very moment we are writing, is reported to have said—"That the *object* of civil society, in "forming regulations on the subject of marriage, should be "to render the contract of marriage *certain* between the "parties, and all the world besides."—*Times*, June 4.

We proceed now to exhibit to the reader, and to place upon record, the history of those exertions by which the subject of dissenters' marriages has been raised to the importance it now holds in the public mind. The indifference of the dissenters—of even enlightened Unitarian dissenters—to the objections which existed against submitting to the marriage ceremony, had long been matter of serious regret with the early members of our church; and we had, in consequence, frequently stated to our Unitarian acquaintances, our scruples against submitting to a Trinitarian marriage service. Our objections, however, received little attention; we were scarcely, indeed, supposed to be serious; it appearing to be the general sentiment of most whom we consulted that, upon such an occasion as marriage, it was little short of affectation to feel scruples of conscience, and that "Cupid cares not for creeds." How readily the dissenters satisfied their consciences in this respect may be collected from an avowal contained in a work esteemed to be the very manual of *non-conformity*, and proceeding from an able and enlightened writer: "The marriage ceremony "is also performed at the altar, an evident relic of popery, "which makes matrimony one of the seven sacraments. If "it be objected that the dissenters are inconsistent in submitting to be married at the altar, it is answered they consider marriage as a *civil* affair, and therefore can submit "to the will of the magistrate in regard to the *place, as well "as other circumstances of this rite.*"—*Nonconformist's Catechism*.

We have seen it asserted that, when the district meetings of the united dissenters took place, in England, in the year 1789, in order to obtain the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, it was also designed to move for an emendation of the Marriage Act; the object, however, of these meetings was speedily abandoned, and the design of moving for any alteration in the Marriage Act, if ever entertained, was never proceeded in.

In the year 1808, there appeared in "The Monthly Repository," the organ of the Unitarian body, the following letter;—page 377.

"On reading Mr. Lindsey's treatise on "Christian Idolatry," I met with an objection, page 110, to that part of the marriage ceremony, according to the form of the church of England, where the priest prays to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, to bless the married couple. This led me to examine the form of marriage with more attention, when I discovered additional objections; such as the invocation, 'Christ have mercy upon us,' and the declaration which the man is obliged to repeat after the priest, 'With this *ring* I thee wed, with my body I thee *worship*, and with all my worldly goods I thee *endow*, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now, though any thinking and honest man might object to the mummery of the *ring*, the wickedness of promising to *worship his wife*, and the falsehood of *endowing* her with all his worldly goods, it appears to me utterly impossible for an Unitarian, either tacitly or openly, to join in the worship of the man Jesus, or to pronounce that he does all this, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thereby giving a sanction to the absurd and idolatrous notion of the Trinity. As such, I shall not be able to be married in the church of England, which *Unitarians consider as antichristian*, unless some of your learned correspondents can give me a fair, honest, and rational explanation, how I may conscientiously go through the ceremony, or obtain a wife consistently with Christian principles without it. A speedy insertion and reply will much oblige."

This letter, though anonymous, was written advisedly, and with the design of calling the attention of the Unitarian dissenters to the important subject on which it treats. It was from the pen of a respected member of our church, but the editor took the freedom of *altering the signature*, and signing it "*AN UNITARIAN BATCHELOR*." The letter was also headed in the Repository in a similar manner, and thus a subject deeply affecting the rights of conscience, was made to assume an air of lightness, somewhat approaching to the ridiculous. The only notice that was taken of this letter was that of a correspondent in the same volume, (page 470) who signed himself "An Unitarian Husband;" and who—after briefly stating that, in the instance of his own marriage, he used the words "In the name of ALMIGHTY GOD," instead of "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" and that being *known* to the minister no notice was taken of the deviation, but that he took his *fee*, and wished him happiness—proceeds to warn the Unitarian batchelor that, if he "take to himself a wife, without performing the marriage ceremony as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, the marriage will be void in the eye of the law, and the offspring illegitimate;" he then, after recommending his own example, concludes by "hoping that the Unitarian batchelor will soon be blessed with a wife, without departing from his principles." Now, not to notice other objections, the advice contained in this letter was, at once, *inconsistent and impracticable*. *Inconsistent*—because it advised

a departure from the marriage ceremony at the same time that it avowed that the marriage would be void, unless the ceremony were performed "*as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.*" *Impracticable*—because few ministers would suffer such an alteration in the service, except, as in the instance of the writer, the party might be a particular friend or acquaintance. This subject, important as it was, received no notice whatever from the able and enlightened editor of the Repository; and for a space of *four* years not even a single correspondent adverted thereto, and yet, during this period, "The Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty," with whom the most enlightened Unitarians were associated, was in active operation for the attainment of objects of far inferior importance to the conscientious disciple of Jesus; we allude to the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts; the claim of dissenters to pass to their places of worship free of toll; and the objections of clergymen to bury the children of dissenters, in cases where they had not been baptized in the church. The first of these objects was important chiefly to those who aspired to the honours or emoluments of the state. The second was designed merely to protect the pockets of those who could afford to ride to their places of meeting, and is an exemption, we think, unjust in principle. The last claims merely the performance of a superstitious rite, from a church which the dissenter has renounced; and which, *as a dissenter*, he ought to feel it disgraceful to accept at the hands of a priest whose communion he has relinquished. And yet, upon subjects such as these, the labours, the vapouring, the speech-making, the resolution-passing of these enlightened dissenters, between the years 1808 and 1812, would fill a volume—whilst a subject constituting a *direct violation of conscience* was utterly neglected!

In the mean time, in the year 1811, "*The Freethinking Christians' Magazine*" was commenced;* and, in the very first number of that work, we had an article "On the Marriage Ceremony," in which we took occasion strongly and pointedly to call the attention of Unitarians to this important subject—to rebuke their delay and condemn their inconsistency. We called upon the Unitarian clergy, in particular, to rouse their followers to a sense of the violation

* The work under this title was published from the year 1811 to 1814, and has been long out of print.

of principle, which a quiet acquiescence in the marriage ceremony manifested to the world; we declared that, unless the Unitarian clergy pursued this incumbent duty, they were "betrayers of their flocks, and enemies of the truths they profess to believe;" and we encouraged their congregations to make those efforts which they were called on to do from a conviction, that from their numbers and respectability they could not fail to obtain parliamentary relief. Towards the end of the same volume (1811) this subject was again discussed by a Correspondent, and it was with pleasure we witnessed the first fruits of our labours among the Unitarians, in a letter which appeared in the *Monthly Repository* the next year (1812) p. 567, written evidently by an Unitarian, dated Norfolk, and signed T. The writer does not advert to the services we had rendered to this cause; but he very properly and boldly asks, "Can any sufficient cause be given for confining the performance of the marriage ceremony to the clergy of the established church? Why should not the objections of Unitarians to Trinitarian language, upon this occasion, be treated with the same respect as those of 'Friends' upon other grounds? We who most solemnly protest against the worship of Jesus Christ, are permitted to baptize our children, and to commit our departed friends to the silent abodes of the grave, in the use of religious forms which we prefer to those which are prescribed by an authority unacknowledged by us. In the present enlightened state of the world justice and decorum, no less than religion, require, that, in a protestant country, there should be full and complete liberty of conscience to marry and to bury where and as we like." The allusion in the above to the right of Unitarians to baptize their children, will sufficiently indicate that the writer was not a Freethinking Christian; our society having long previously rejected *infant baptism* as an idle and puerile rite derived from the church of Rome: adult baptism we had also abandoned, as a ceremony applicable to the Jewish converts alone, at the first introduction of Christianity, and in no way binding on Christians in the present day.

From 1812 to 1815 no further notice of the marriage question appears to have been taken by any Unitarian writer in the *Repository*. During this interval the subject occupied the frequent attention of the Freethinking Christians; and when, in the year 1812, notice had been given in the House of Commons, of a motion for amending the

Marriage Act, with regard to its operation on the marriage of minors, &c. two of our members took occasion, in a correspondence with the learned mover, to point out the unjust operation of the act as regarded Unitarian dissenters, and to suggest the propriety of making their case a part of his intended measure. The honourable gentlemen, in his reply, admitted the importance of the case stated "in a moral, as well as political point of view;" but, aiming at one specific object, he expressed himself unwilling to introduce any other subject, "*however seriously wanted*," lest he should provoke some difference of opinion, that might retard his first object. He further admitted, that, since his attention had been drawn to the Marriage Act, he had seen several points which it would be advisable to alter; and intimated the probability of his attempting its reform on a larger scale! In the year 1813, when Mr. W. Smith had been successful in obtaining for Unitarian dissenters a relief from so much of the 9th and 10th William III. as relates to persons denying the Trinity, it was deemed a favourable opportunity again to urge upon Unitarians the propriety of making an effort to obtain relief with regard to the marriage ceremony. Accordingly one of our members addressed a letter to the Monthly Repository on this subject, signed, "A Friend to the Rights of Conscience;" this letter, however, the editor rejected, upon the plea, as stated in the notice to correspondents, that the style was too "impassioned and oratorical," but that "a cool and temperate statement of the grievance" would be admitted. This letter, thus rejected, was subsequently published in our own Magazine for 1814, with remarks. In the mean time, as the Unitarians as a body had as yet done nothing to obtain relief; and as several of the youth of our church were now approaching that period of life when they were likely to enter on the marriage state, the course which, as Christians, it behoved them to adopt, became the subject of serious inquiry. For a long time it had appeared to us, that our only course would be for our members to take a journey to Scotland, to celebrate their marriages in that country; but upon further consideration this plan was abandoned, because it did not appear applicable to the various situations and circumstances of the members of a Christian church, many of whom could not afford the expense; whilst others, such as clerks, servants, &c. could not obtain the time for such a journey. It was considered also that such a course exhibited to the world no public testimony against the injustice of the mar-

riage ceremony, and could have no tendency to procure for us any relief from the Legislature; but that by making a public opposition to, and protest against, the marriage ceremony, in the place where it was performed, we should not only acquit our consciences to God, but exhibit our integrity to the world; and that the very inconvenience which the celebration of our marriages would occasion to the clergy themselves, might, by possibility, lay the ground of future relief. And here, perhaps, we may remark, that almost every clergyman who has been called upon to marry any of our members, has expressed his anxious wish to be relieved by law from so painful a duty, and they have generally agreed in the justice of our claims on the consideration of the legislature. Our views, however, and reasons for adopting the course of *protesting* against the marriage ceremony, are stated at length in an article on this subject, contained in the last number of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine for 1813; and in the month of June, in the following year, the views there stated were, for the first time, carried into effect. The following account of this proceeding is extracted from our Magazine of 1814:—

“The two individuals on whom it devolved to set the example in this case, thought it advisable to acquaint the minister, to whom they intended to apply, with their intention and determination to present a Protest to him against the marriage ceremony: it would leave him at liberty deliberately to act as he thought fit, and themselves to be prepared against the consequences of such action; accordingly the brother, whose name appears affixed to the Protest below, waited upon the minister by whom he intended to be married, and explicitly and frankly informed him of his situation and intention. He was received with politeness: he set forth that he was a Dissenter—a Dissenter from Dissenters—a heretic of the worst class—that however erroneous his opinions might be, he hoped he might have the credit of being sincere in those opinions—that it was that sincerity which induced him to say, that believing, as he did, the church of England to have no more authority from the New Testament than the East India Company, or any chartered or corporate body—that the worship to which it was consecrated was idolatrous—that the minister before whom he stood was unsanctioned as a minister of religion by any appointment of Jesus—that on those accounts it was impossible for him silently to join in the marriage ceremony, without a violation of his conscience, unless he did some act which should mark his detestation of the whole system to which he was forced to subscribe—and that, accordingly, it was his intention to present a Protest at the altar against the marriage ceremony. On this the minister positively, and with some warmth, declared he would not marry our friend—that he, in common with thousands of other ministers, was sworn to support the worship and doctrines of the church of England, which were founded in scripture—and that he would not marry any man that should come to the church to act against what the laws of the country had prescribed.

“It was urged in reply, on the part of our friend, that he did not apply

For any favour, but for a civil right, which he apprehended the minister had no power to deprive him of—that it was his intention to comply with all that the law required—and that he wished to know explicitly, whether he (the minister) seriously imagined he had any discretionary power in the business—whether, in fact, he could refuse; for that if he determined so to do, it was his decided intention to take legal proceedings to obtain what he considered a civil right guaranteed by the Marriage Act. The minister saw clearly the situation in which he was placed; and, though true to church and king, found, that as he could not reason our friend out of his opinions, it might be dangerous to attempt to deprive him of his rights.

“A few weeks subsequent to this interview, when the banns had been regularly published, the party put the following Protest into the hands of the minister at the altar, at the moment he was about to commence the ceremony—the bridegroom observing, “I deliver into your hands this Protest against the Marriage Ceremony.”

To Mr. Crosby, commonly called the Rev. Mr. Crosby.

“The undersigned, being Unitarian dissenters, present to you the following Protest against the Marriage Ceremony, to which, according to the law of the land, they are compelled to subscribe; they disclaim all intention of acting disrespectfully, either to the legislature, or to its civil officer before whom they stand: they lament that they are placed in a situation so unnatural, as that even forbearance to what they consider as established error would be a formal recantation of opinions which they received on conviction, and which, they will only renounce on similar grounds. Against the Marriage Ceremony, then, they can but most solemnly Protest:—

“Because it makes Marriage a religious, instead of a civil, act:—

“Because, as Christians and Protestant Dissenters, it is impossible we can allow of the interference of any human institution with matters which concern our faith and consciences:—

“Because, as knowing nothing of a priesthood in Christianity, the submission to a ceremony performed by a person “in holy orders, or pretended holy orders,” is painful and humiliating to our feelings:—

“Because, as servants of Jesus, we worship the ONE LIVING AND TRUE God, his God and our God, his father and our father, and disbelieve and abominate the doctrine of the Trinity, in whose name the Marriage Ceremony is performed.

(Signed) { WILLIAM COATES,
 { MARY ANN THOMPSON,

Members of the church of God, known by the name of—
June 10, 1814. “FREETHINKING CHRISTIANS,”

No further account of this marriage will be necessary, except to state that a considerable part of the ceremony was omitted by the minister, who, as far as he could do so with safety to himself, appeared to manifest every wish to deal tenderly with the consciences of our friends. The marriage protest delivered in this instance, with some particulars of the case, were sent by us to the Monthly Repository, and inserted by the editor; it was also published in the Examiner Newspaper

and some other prints. At the close of this year, 1814, our *Magazine* was discontinued, having therefore no longer the opportunity of urging the importance of obtaining relief from the marriage ceremony through that medium, we took an early occasion of attending the Unitarian Fund Annual Dinner, held at the London Tavern, at which, from the circumstance of Unitarians from most parts of the country being assembled, we deemed a favourable opportunity would be presented of introducing this subject. One of our friends accordingly addressed the company at some length, stating the general merits of the question; and, after detailing what we had done to obtain relief, and what the Unitarians had left undone, enforced the necessity of an immediate and persevering endeavour to obtain from the legislature parliamentary relief. It is but justice to the company assembled to say that our friend's address was well received, and that Mr. Frend, the Vice-President, expressed his sense of the importance of the subject, and gave his assurance that the committee would take it into consideration. From this time the subject obtained the general attention of Unitarian dissenters. In the year 1816 various correspondents exhibited their objections to the ceremony, through the medium of the *Monthly Repository*; it became a theme of general inquiry and discussion, and in the following year the Kent and Sussex Unitarian Association took the step of petitioning parliament for relief. Their petition, signed by nearly 500 names, was presented to the Lords by the Marquis of Lansdown, and to the Commons by Mr. William Smith. These petitions attracted the attention of *The Times* daily newspaper, which, after offering various reflections little favourable to the object of the petitioners, concluded by dissuading Mr. Smith from persevering in the measure which they attributed to him—of bringing a bill into parliament for the relief of the petitioners. Mr. Smith took occasion to reply, in a letter, to the strictures in the *Times*; whether this gentleman was influenced by the admonition of the *Times*—whether he acted on the policy of concealing his real objects; or had not made up his mind as to the propriety of moving for the required relief, does not appear; but to our surprise and disappointment, he stated, in correction of the report of the *Times*, as to his avowed intention—"Now, what ever may be my opinion, I beg it may be understood that, on the occasion referred to, acting only as the organ of others, I merely presented the petition of a number of Unitarians, who conceive themselves to be aggrieved by

“ the existing law; and that I did not hold out any pledge, or (to the best of my recollection) *even hint a design of farther prosecuting the business.*” This declaration, from a gentleman who was understood to speak the sentiments of the Unitarian body, was little calculated to stimulate our hopes in favour of any speedy relief from the legislature; and from this time, 1817, to 1819, nothing of a public nature appears to have been done by the Unitarians to further the measure in question. The members of our church continuing, however, to enter into marriage, and to deliver protests against the ceremony, these protests, besides being published in other prints, were regularly sent by us to the *Monthly Repository*, and constitute the only communications, upon this important subject, which appeared in that work during the period of time above alluded to. At the commencement of the year 1819, a meeting of Unitarians was held at the London Tavern, to consider the propriety of forming an association for the protection of the “ *civil rights of Unitarians*,” when the importance of the subject we had for so long a time so unsuccessfully attempted to urge on the leaders of the Unitarian body, was then, for the first time, we believe, publicly recognized by Mr. Robert Aspland, the conductor of the *Monthly Repository*. This gentleman, in an able and argumentative speech, the purport of which it gave us great pleasure to read proceeded, after touching on a great variety of topics, to say—

“ There was one subject to which it was difficult to allude, but on which much had been of late said, and of which therefore some notice must be taken. Our adversaries might be jocular upon it, but to us it was a serious grievance. He alluded to the necessity of passing to the marriage state through Trinitarian ordinances. It appeared that the legislature by passing the late bill meant effectually to protect us; if they did not, the act was a delusion and a snare; but if that was their intention, all must see that it was not accomplished, while Unitarians were obliged, against their principles and consciences, to submit to Athanasian worship. As a dissenter, on the broadest ground, he should object to such a compulsive conformity, but as Unitarians, they were compelled, in this instance, to violate their dearest opinions, and strongest religious feelings. The moral responsibility rested, no doubt, on the legislature which occasioned the offence, but surely they ought to attempt to throw off the burden.”

Immediately on the formation of the above association a letter, signed “ A Constant Reader,” and from the pen of one of our members, was forwarded to the *Repository*, containing various questions on the marriage ceremony; and in a postscript, with the view of fastening this important matter on the newly-formed association, it was added—“ I have just learned by the public prints, that a meeting has been

“ held for the establishment of an association for the protection of the *civil rights* of Unitarians. It is impossible that the committee appointed to carry into effect the objects of the association, can be in any way employed in a manner more consistent with the principles of their appointment, than in a serious effort to obtain legislative relief to the Unitarian dissenter in the instance of the marriage ceremony.”—*Monthly Repository*, vol. 14, p. 160.

An universal interest was now excited, in favour of this subject, throughout the Unitarian public, by means of this new society; and, desirous of promoting, by all the means in our power, the general object, it had been discussed among us whether we were not called upon to send deputies from our church to act with the association, in common with the deputies of Unitarian congregations generally. Some objections, upon principle, having, however, been taken to this course of proceeding, by one of our country branches, it was abandoned; but it was agreed to act concurrently with the Unitarian association, in promotion of the general object, it being concluded by us that no difference with the Unitarians upon other subjects, however important, ought to prevent us from acting in accordance with them, when they were so laudably engaged in obtaining an important *civil right*, and when we could view them in the broad character of *fellow-citizens*. Accordingly, when in this year petitions for relief were forwarded from the Unitarians in various parts of England, similar petitions were also sent to parliament from our own connexion in London, and from the churches associated with us in the country; we were also successful in obtaining promises of support from several members of the House of Commons, on whom we waited, as well as from a distinguished peer and great political leader of the upper House. Soon after the presentation of these petitions, Mr. Smith brought in a bill for the relief of Unitarian dissenters from so much of the marriage ceremony as was contrary to their religious belief. The discussion on the commitment of this bill came on in the House of Commons 1st July, 1819. It was, upon the whole, favourably received by the House; *Lord Castlereagh* is reported to have “ urged the propriety of not proceeding with the bill farther in the present session. He wished not to express any decided opinion as to the measure, but it was to be remarked that it only gave relief to one class of persons, who objected to the present marriage ceremony—the protestant dissenters—and not to the catholics—who also objected to

"it. *He was sure there would be but one feeling as to the propriety of giving every attention to the scruples of conscientious persons.*"—See the Report of the Debate, Monthly Repository, vol. 14, p. 446. In consequence of the lateness of the session Mr. Smith did not press the committal of the bill, and it was dropped by consent till a future occasion.

Whilst these proceedings were taking place in parliament a more general attention was called to the subject of dissenters marriages, by the marriage of one of our friends, whose name was then associated in the public mind as the author of a work on America,* which had met with a peculiarly favourable reception. The protest delivered by our friend on this occasion, against the ceremony, found its way into most of the London daily and provincial papers, which hitherto, *out of respect to their clerical readers, had refused* to insert such protests; and much discussion was in consequence excited among a new and more extended circle of public inquirers. The newspapers, according to their peculiar politics or interest, applauded, ridiculed, or abused the conduct of our friend, but all tended to make our objections to the marriage ceremony the more notorious; and it was now, with peculiar satisfaction, that we saw our example, in protesting against the marriage ceremony, followed by individuals not connected with us, and with whom we had no acquaintance. An instance of this occurred in the case of a Mr. Thomas E. Fisher, an attorney at law, of Kettering; Northamptonshire. This gentleman having some time previously observed the protest of one of the members of our church in the Monthly Repository, had written to our friend, desiring to be informed as to the best mode of proceeding with regard to the protest, the time and manner of presenting it, &c. Our friend, in his answer, gave the particulars of the general proceedings of our members on such occasions, and suggesting the best advice that occurred to him under the circumstances. It was in pursuance of the advice thus offered that Mr. T. E. Fisher acted, and the statement of his conduct, as recorded in the Monthly Repository, (vol. 14, p. 340) was not less gratifying to ourselves than we think it was honourable to him. This gentleman had, it will be seen, first taken the step of writing to the bishop of the diocese on the subject of his objections to the marriage ceremony. His lordship in answer replied

* Fearon's Sketches of America.

—"It would be foreign to the present subject to enter on a defence of our marriage service, when, if my views of it were the same as your own, I could not possibly grant your request. From your knowledge of the law you must be well aware that the rubric of the liturgy is the law of the land, and consequently if I allowed an alteration in the marriage service, so as to suit either your views, or those of any other person, I should act in defiance of the statutes, as well as of episcopal duty. And if any clergyman should venture, in the reading of the marriage service, either to omit, or to alter, he would be subject to very heavy penalties."

When the reader calls to mind that this language is from the pen of My Lord of Peterborough, whose staunch adherence to the church we have on a late occasion done so much justice to—whose orthodoxy is of the largest calibre, and whose faith nothing but an act of parliament could shake—it will excite little surprise, although it may occasion some alarm, both to those who are without, as well as to those who are within, his lordship's parliamentary church establishment; for the opinion thus propounded on his lordship's authority would prove that, as long as the law remains as it is, dissenters must submit to every part of the marriage service, however offensive or blasphemous some parts may appear to them; it would also expose every clergyman of the church to heavy penalties, as they uniformly do omit some portion—frequently a great portion—in reading the marriage service. And even though it should be admitted that the rubric of the liturgy is the law of the land, still many cases might be stated in which it would be impossible for the clergyman to follow the directions of the rubric.* But knowing as they do that the

* There is a prayer, for example, in the marriage service to which this rubric is affixed—"This prayer next following shall be omitted where the woman is past child-bearing." Now by what knowledge short of inspiration, we should be glad to know, can the minister positively undertake to determine this point? Is he, on every marriage, to have a committee of matrons, or a consultation of physicians, to assist at the marriage ceremony; or, is he to follow his own judgment? and if, in any case, he shall omit the prayer in question, and there should be issue from the marriage so celebrated, will he not, according to the doctrine of his lordship, "be subject to very heavy penalties." In some parts of the marriage service the man is directed by the rubric to "say after the minister." Now how could a man who is dumb comply with this direction? The following extract from the "London Magazine" of 1754 will shew that, in such a case, the directions of the

Marriage Act was designed only to prevent unlawful marriages, by giving publicity to the celebration of the marriage, the clergy content themselves with acting in the true *spirit* of the law, without regard to the precise and antiquated directions of the rubric, and read so much of the ceremony as best suits their own convenience, the rule of their practice being—that the shorter it is the better it is. And here it is not a little important to note that, in the very instance of the marriage now under consideration, between Thomas E. Fisher and Ann Child, the minister *did* omit some very material parts of the marriage service; an omission which is of the more importance, as it would appear to have been made advisedly; for, in Mr. Fisher's letter, dated May 4, 1819, addressed to our friend, and containing the account of his interview with the minister, on which occasion he requested that certain parts of the ceremony might be dispensed with, this gentleman states, "*He*" (the minister) "*thought it right, however, to write to his DIOCESAN for his advice and direction as to what he ought to do respecting my request.*" In the report of this marriage, as contained in the Monthly Repository, it will be seen that the parties presented a protest against the ceremony, chiefly composed from those which had been published by our friends; and we find it recorded by them, that "the minister, on this occasion omitted, at Mr. Fisher's request, part of the introduction to the service; dispensed with the kneeling at the altar; placing the ring on the book; and he omitted also all the prayers and blessings which follow the words 'I pronounce that they be man and wife together, in the name, &c.' (except the first short prayer immediately following.) He particularly begged to go through the service, and receive the protest in the vestry, and not at

rubric have been dispensed with. "In the register of St. Martin's parish, Leicester, *Decimo quinto Februarii*, 18 *Eliz. Reginae*, Thomas Tilsly and Ursula Russet were married; and because the said Thomas was, and is, naturally deaf and dumb, could not, for his part, observe the order of the form of marriage, after the approbation had, from Thomas the bishop of Lincoln, John Chippendale L.L.D. and commissary, and Mr. Richard Davis, mayor of Leicester, and others of his brethren, with the rest of the parish, the said Thomas, for expressing of his mind, *instead of words*, of his own accord, used these signs; first he embraced her with his arm, took her by the hand, and put a ring on her finger, and laid his hand upon his heart, and held up his hand towards heaven; and to shew his continuance to dwell with her to his life's end, he did it by closing his eyes with his hands, and digging the earth with his feet, and pulling as though he would pull a bell, with other signs approved.—*Concordat cum originali.* S. H."

"the altar, both of which we objected to. His conduct altogether was most liberal, candid, and gentlemanly."

On the following year, as appears from the *Monthly Repository*, (vol. 15, p. 388) another protest was presented against the marriage ceremony, by a party wholly unknown to our society. The statement of the particulars of this case is accompanied by a sensible letter, in which the writer observes that "ultimately such firm and consistent testimonies against this ceremony will be useful, as they must bring it into universal discredit; I hope, therefore, that example will be influential, and that the practice will become more general till the evil be remedied." The introductory matter of this protest was taken verbatim from those previously presented by our members, and the grounds of objection to the ceremony were thus briefly and happily put: "first, because it makes marriage a religious, instead of a civil act; second, because it implies the existence of three equal persons in the Divine Nature; third, because it retains superstitious customs; and, fourth, because parts of it are highly indelicate." This marriage was celebrated at the parish church of Gainsborough, on the 26th of April, 1820, between Lieut. Joseph Taylor, R.S. Lincoln Militia, and Elizabeth Lloyd, both of Gainsborough.

The letter, of which we have already spoken as sent by our friend in reply to Mr. T. E. Fisher's inquiries, though written with no view to publication, was afterwards forwarded to and inserted in the *Monthly Repository* of the same year, (vol. 14, p. 179) under an impression that it might contain directions and advice useful to others. This letter so published caught the attention of the *Edinburgh Reviewers*, and was inserted at length in their pages, at the beginning of the year 1821, in a critique entitled "Dissenters' Marriages," when we had the good fortune to find our objects manfully and ably supported by this powerful and important organ of public opinion. The remarks of the reviewers opened with the following terrific announcement:—

"Strange as the assertion may appear to many clergymen of that establishment, the ENGLISH CHURCH IS MORTAL; and ages hence, though the rivers and the hills remain, there may be no BISHOPS and no DEANS. Now the receipt we would propose for the prolongation of the existence of this venerable system is the diminution of needless hostility, a display of good humour, liberality, and condescension, and a habit of giving way on trifles, in order to preserve essentials."

After some further observations in a similar strain, the reviewers insert the letter of our friend, signed "John Dillon," whom they designated as "*An Unitarian Minister*," a character which the editor of the *Monthly Repository*, in noticing the review, did our friend the kindness and the justice to allow did not belong to him. Mr. Dillon's letter contains a plain and correct account of the manner in which our friends had generally presented their protests, and of the contests to which, on account of the illiberality of the clergyman, they had sometimes unhappily given rise, even within the walls and before "the altar" of the church. Upon this statement the reviewers remark—"These scenes are very indecent, and fully as painful to every respectable clergyman who witnesses them as they must be to every respectable dissenter by whom they are occasioned. Once begun, *they will become more common*; and every dissenter's marriage will be a *squabble* between the minister and the bridegroom. A theological controversy in the face of the church, at the celebration of a ceremony where every thing should be harmony, peace, and happiness. A congregation of Christians assembled in the house of God, where the people protest against the prayers and disown the minister. Can it be any injury to the cause of religion, to avoid a ceremony carried on under circumstances so indecent and so revolting. Can any conscientious clergyman blame a dissenter for the freedom and boldness of such a protest? Would he himself submit to be married, and listen to doctrines utterly subversive of the doctrines of the English church, without protesting against them? Would he publicly disown his own creed? Would he condescend to repeat after a dissenting minister doctrines utterly subversive of, and contradictory to, his own faith? It is in vain to say the dissenter is wrong; he has tried to be right; his opinion is conscientiously taken up; he stakes his eternal safety upon it, and it is impossible he can yield it up to the arm of temporal power!" These remarks are so sound, and exhibit so correctly the feelings of the enlightened conscientious dissenter, as well as the impolicy of the present marriage law, that they require no further observation on our part. With the view, however, of more particularly exhibiting the difficulty and mortification to which our friends are exposed in following the dictates of conscience, as well as of proving how truly the reviewers had predicted that the scenes on which they had remarked *would become more common*, and

that the dissenter's marriage would be a squabble between the minister and the bridegroom, we copy from our *church book* the following attested reports of two recent marriages of members of our body.

"The Elder and other Members present at the Marriage of our Brother Robert Tiffin with our Sister Sarah Turner, have to report to the Church as follows :—

"On the morning of Sunday, April 27, 1823, we proceeded to the parish church of St. Luke's, and found assembled before "the Communion Table," various other parties, met for a similar purpose. We being informed that there were to be celebrated at the same time several other marriages.

"On the arrival of Mr. Rice, the officiating minister, and just previous to the commencement of the ceremony, our Brother Tiffin presented a written protest signed by his intended Wife and himself, and drawn up in the form approved by the church. He accompanied the delivery with these words :—" *I deliver this as our protest against the religious part of the ceremony.*" The Minister then exclaimed, "*What is this?*" On the reply being given, "*It is my protest,*" he dashed the paper violently, though perhaps undesignedly, into the face of one of our friends, exclaiming, "*I can receive no protest.*" The Minister then proceeded to declare that by the presenting this paper he had been insulted; when the Elder, who was standing by, having to perform part of the ceremony, called "the giving away" the bride, endeavoured respectfully to explain that no insult was or could be intended, as the presenting the protest was only the expression of conscientious scruples on the part of our friends as being dissenters. All endeavours, however, at such explanation, though frequently made, were interrupted and prevented by a vehement and constant demand that the party who presented the protest should withdraw it, and an avowal that he could not listen to our religious scruples. After this had been more than once repeated, our friends adverted to the licence which had been obtained, and called upon Mr. Rice, as the officer appointed by law to fulfil his duty by completing the marriage—instead of which he left the communion table, declaring "that he would not marry the individuals, and appealing to those present (the parties connected with the celebration of the other marriages) that he had been interrupted in the discharge of his sacred office," and he threatened us more than once with proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court, *the consequence of which he described as of the most dreadful nature, and the extent of which he said we were probably but little aware of*—and wound up the whole by directing the sexton TO GO FOR A CONSTABLE—a command which was immediately obeyed, and the constable arrived accordingly.

"The whole of the party now proceeded to the vestry, where occurred a repetition of the same threats and violence on the part of the Minister, and the same vain endeavour at explanation on our part; at one time he insisted that one of the parties present (the Elder) should leave the church with the protest, asserting that it was *he* who had insulted him by presenting it. From the influence of irritation he would appear to have been really mistaken on this point, but the clerk interfered to assure him that the protest was presented by the individual to be married. Still insisting that he would not perform the marriage unless reparation were made him, he left us in company with the constable and the sexton, and proceeded into the church, the doors of which were closed against us, to perform the

other marriages, the individuals attending which had all the time been spectators of the scene which we have been describing.

"On the return of the Minister to the vestry, he addressed our Brother Tiffin at considerable length, expressing his own reverence for the *sacred place* in which he stood, and the *sacred office* he had to perform, and avowing his readiness "to make every proper allowance for the errors and mistaken views on religious matters into which our brother had fallen!" but declaring once more that he would not allow him to express his religious scruples by any protest. He then shifted his ground and asserted that he would not marry the parties unless an *apology* were publicly made in the church for the *insult* which had been offered him by presenting the protest. To this language on his part we replied by stating, that *apology* we could not make as we were aware of having done nothing but what was conscientiously right: our Brother Tiffin stating, however, that whilst he could not apologise for, he was quite ready to *explain* the reasons of, his conduct, which he proceeded to do, by again stating that no intention personally to insult him did exist, or could have existed—that the parties to be married came there to go through a certain ceremony which by the law of the land they were *compelled* to go through in order to make the marriage binding, and that the protest was only intended to express their conscientious objections to the ceremony.

"Some further remarks had passed on both sides, when Mr. Rice remarked, that if he married the parties after what had passed, it would be to avoid the dreadful consequences which would ensue to them! On hearing this implied intention to go on with the ceremony, without his demand for an apology being complied with, we again motioned to proceed into the church—but he, contrary, as we believe, both to the letter and spirit of the law, particularly of the Marriage Act, insisted that only the couple to be married, and the party who was to act as *father* to the bride, should enter there: it was only in consequence of a special request that he allowed two female friends, who were present, also to accompany our sister; the other friends of the bride and bridegroom who were severally called upon personally to apologize, though some had scarcely taken any part in what had passed, were restrained from entering the church on their refusing to submit, and were at first shut up in the vestry; the doors, however, were afterwards opened by some of the attendants, and they were thus allowed to remain distant spectators of the ceremony.

"Of the performance of the ceremony itself, we have little to inform the church: our brother Tiffin bore the usual testimony against what to us is perhaps the most objectionable part of the ceremony, by at first declining to repeat the form relative to the Trinity; and when compelled to do so, the words he used were nearly as follows: "In the name of the Father, and (but protesting against it as a disbeliever in the Trinity) of the Son, and (but protesting against it) of the Holy Ghost." The minister, however, insisted upon his again repeating this form, *without* the words he had introduced. The minister then appeared to hasten through the ceremony, pronouncing the parties to be man and wife; and as he *omitted* all the prayers and the latter part of the ceremony, our friends were not called upon to kneel before what we esteem an idolatrous altar.

"On our return to the vestry, the minister stated that he felt quite dissatisfied with himself for what he had done in marrying the parties, after the protest they had delivered, putting his having done so wholly upon the *ground of consideration for the consequences to them*; but he took occasion at the end in a very pointed manner to declare, that he did not in any way wish to interfere with our religious scruples, though he must

object to our expressing them in that place, and concluded with this declaration: "*I should be glad to see Dissenters relieved with respect to the mode of marrying; and if you would bring me a petition to the legislature, praying for that relief, I, as a clergyman of the Church of England, would be the first to put my hand to it.*"

"The elder and other friends, in reporting to the church this further instance in which they have been placed under the painful necessity of acting a part, which, although compelled by principle, is equally repugnant to *their* feelings as it can be to those of the ministers and parties called upon to officiate—which equally violates their consciences and the alleged sanctity of the place and office in and against which they offer their protest, are induced to express a hope that the time may speedily arrive when the legislature shall relieve at once the establishment and the dissenters from a repetition of scenes painful and humiliating as that which it has now fallen to our lot to communicate to our brethren in the church."

Signed by the Elder
and eight friends present.

The personal rudeness and violence of the reverend gentleman, as exhibited on the above occasion, will perhaps surprise our readers more than it has done ourselves. *Our* sentiments of the clergy are sufficiently known; and whether the individual in question may be taken as an unfavourable or a fair average specimen of that body, it is of little consequence to inquire. The report, however, above given, fails to convey any adequate idea of *the violence and gesticulation* exhibited by Mr. Rice, on the occasion referred to, as our friends, in drawing up an official document, confined themselves to a mere statement of facts; rather avoiding in such a paper any attempt to convey an impression of *manner* which could not fail in the present instance, if it reached the *truth*, to have the appearance of going beyond it. The reader, however, will derive no incorrect impression of the reverend gentleman, if we may be permitted to express ourselves in the nomenclature of the *phrenologist*, and to say that he appeared to us to possess the organ of *combateness* very powerfully developed! whilst the hyperbole of the poet would scarcely be found to exaggerate his oratorical powers:

"Language which Boreas might to Auster hold,
More rough than forty Germans when they scold."

We readily confess, indeed, that Mr. Rice had, on the above occasion, a painful task to perform, being called upon to administer an established ceremony under circumstances of embarrassment and difficulty. Our friends, however, on their part, had done every thing which a polite consideration for the difficult duty cast upon the minister could suggest. They had twice called at his house to apprise him of their intention to protest against the ceremony, and the reverend gentleman had twice been denied to them as

"*Not at home.*" Mr. Rice, however, did our brother Tiffin the favour of calling at his house; but, as some difficulty was apprehended with regard to the licence, it became necessary for our friend to wait again upon Mr. Rice the day before the marriage; when, on seeing the reverend gentleman's son, they were a third time told that Mr. Rice was "*not at home*;" but upon the nature and importance of their business being explained, the young gentleman very candidly admitted that his father *was at home*, but that he was—*at dinner, and did not like to be disturbed!* The son, however, after conveying certain telegraphic communications between our friends at the door and the priest at the dinner table, succeeded in obtaining an interview for the former. After, therefore, the attentive, respectful, and courteous conduct of our brethren, they but little expected to be beset in so terrific a manner by this clerical spirit, which they had taken so much pains to propitiate. Did the interruption of the *marriage ceremony*, by our friends, excite in the mind of the reverend gentleman a recollection of their having interrupted the *dinner ceremony*, and thus draw down upon their heads a double portion of his ire? Be that as it may, certain it is that good Mr. Rice was as pugnacious at being disturbed at *marrying* as at *eating*; and in the exercise of his holy boldness, he appears to have acted with a vigour beyond the law; for whereas he undertook to keep our friends in the vestry-room in a state of blockade, and to order that none other but the parties to be married and the individual who was to act as *father* to the bride should enter the church; he ought to have known that the law requires that "*all marriages shall be solemnized in the presence of two credible witnesses at least, besides the minister, who shall sign their attestation thereof*;" and that the rubric expressly directs, that "*at the day and time appointed for solemnization of matrimony, the persons to be married shall come into the body of the church, WITH THEIR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS; and there standing together, the man on the right hand, and the woman on the left,*" the marriage is to proceed.

We pass on to another report:—

"*Report presented to the Church of the particulars of the Marriage between our Brother, John Dobell, Member of the Church meeting in Cranbrook, Kent, and our Sister, Julietta Thompson, daughter of our Brother, Samuel Thompson, of Plaistow, Essex, Member of the London branch of the Church.—By the Elder and other Friends present.*

"On Friday, the 23d of May, the parties in this case assembled at the parish church of West-Ham, Essex, with numerous friends and relations,

all being members of the church; anticipating from a statement they had received from our brothers, Samuel Thompson and W. Coates, of a previous interview which they had had with Mr. Jones, the parish minister, that the presenting the usual Protest would have passed off without alteration or offence. The written statement of this previous interview, drawn up by our brothers, S. Thompson and W. Coates, is as follows:—

“On Tuesday, the 20th of May, we waited on Mr. Jones, the vicar of West-Ham parish, to apprise him of the approaching marriage, and to announce to him the intention of the parties to offer a Protest against the Marriage Ceremony. Our proposed proceedings required the less explanation, as Mr. Jones had celebrated two former marriages between members of our church. We stated to him on the present occasion that we had hoped before this time to have been relieved by the legislature from the necessity of coming to him on such occasions; but that in protesting, as it was the intention of the party to do in this case, Mr. Jones must be convinced of the conscientiousness of their motives, as the marriage itself was sufficiently trying to female delicacy, without the distressing circumstances of aggravation which too frequently accompanied the presenting such Protests. That it was our brother Thompson's wish that his daughter should be married in the parish where he lived, if such an understanding could be had as should prevent any thing unpleasant to Mr. Jones, and preserve our own consciences; otherwise we had, in this case, another parish in which, on similar occasions, we had received the most liberal treatment. We then pointed out that the party would feel an objection to *kneeling* before the “altar,” and to some parts of the service which we referred to, and which we expressed a hope that Mr. Jones would not insist on as necessary; seeing that the practice was to omit a great part of the ceremony as prescribed in the book of Common Prayer, and that the making such omissions rested wholly in the breast of the Minister. We further explained, that we stated thus much to him from a wish to avoid all opposition during the ceremony, and, expecting as we did a speedy relief from the legislature, we had consented to ask his forbearance, which otherwise perhaps we should not have done, as his opposition might rather *forward* than retard our endeavour at obtaining relief. That, in protesting against the doctrine of the Trinity and other parts of the marriage ceremony, we hoped, even though Mr. Jones might think our opinions mistaken, rather to have his approbation of our motives, approving, as he must, as a minister of a *reformed and a protestant church*, the conduct of Luther in offering opposition to the sacraments and ceremonies of the Church of Rome, *even though these were then established by law*—and that had he, at that time, himself, as a protestant, been called upon to subscribe to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, he would have approved the conduct of that priest who should have given every relief to his conscience within his power.

“Mr. Jones replied by expressing, that he felt himself placed in a difficult and painful situation. That he did not bring the parties to the church to be married, but that the law brought them there—that his duty was ministerial; that he felt for our situation, and believed we were actuated by conscientious motives. But, he added, that in the instance of the *last* marriage he had performed between members of our body, he considered that *faith had been broken with him*, as at a previous interview with the party, he understood they would have been content, after presenting the protest, to have gone quietly through the ceremony—but, that interruption was offered during the ceremony, and that the whole business had subsequently become public, and had given rise to much unpleasant observation. That ever since that marriage he had uniformly,

and in all cases, gone through the whole of the ceremony as prescribed in the book of Common Prayer. We told him that his practice in this respect was contrary to that of every other Minister of the church, as a great portion of the ceremony was now, by practice and almost by common consent, omitted. He replied, that with the conduct of others he had nothing to do; but that for himself *he did not consider the marriage legal if any part were omitted.* We then remarked, that as to the party alluded to, who he considered had *broken faith with him*, there must have been some misunderstanding; that he, Mr. Jones, would not in any way take cognizance of the protest when presented to him, and that the individual in question, being a man of strong feeling, and governed by a strong sense of integrity, felt himself called upon to protest verbally against such parts of the service as were a violation of his conscience. Mr. Jones then said, 'You will present a written protest—will not that be sufficient for the consciences of the party, without offering objections during the ceremony?' We replied—'No:' that as the protest was not read in the church, the act was only between the Minister and our own consciences; but that we felt ourselves called upon to make a *public* Protest against what we felt as a violation of our consciences—that if he would himself read the Protest aloud, or suffer us to do so, the party would go through the ceremony without opposition. Mr. Jones said, that he would not himself read the protest, but suggested that the parties might make a *verbal* Protest at 'the altar' *before entering on the ceremony*; they might state, that 'they were brought there against their will—that in obedience to the law they came to obtain a legal marriage; that the ceremony was contrary to their consciences, and that they declared their disbelief in what they were now compelled to subscribe to.' We replied, that this suggestion appeared to us so reasonable, that we had no doubt it would satisfy the parties; and that we hoped it would preclude all difficulty to himself and us. Upon this understanding, and after a mutual interchange of civilities, we parted.

(Signed) "S. THOMPSON.
"W. COATES."

"We, the Elder and Friends present at the ceremony, have already stated to the church, that the report of the above interview had prepared us to expect that the ceremony would pass off without any thing particularly unpleasant on either side; when, however, our Brother Dobell proceeded, agreeably to the understanding that had been entered on, to offer a written Protest, and to state "that he came there in obedience to the law, but, contrary to his conscience," his written protest was disdainfully rejected, and his observations were unexpectedly and rudely interrupted by Mr. Jones' saying, he could hear nothing he had to say, and by his demanding, peremptorily and repeatedly, without attention to the address of our Brother Dobell, "Is it your wish that the ceremony should proceed, Sir?" Our Brother Dobell in despite of the continued interruption of the Minister, proceeded to make a verbal protest against submitting to the ceremony *in terms nearly the same, and in substance exactly the same as Mr. Jones had himself suggested*; and at length, after much altercation, occasioned by Mr. Jones's unexpected and unaccountable conduct in resisting the course which he himself had suggested, the ceremony proceeded. When the Minister was about to enter on certain expressions in the early part of the service, wholly unfit for the ear of female delicacy, one of our friends whispered Mr. Jones, "You will not surely, Sir, read those parts—there are young females present?" This consideration, however acutely it was felt by ourselves, had no effect on the mind of the

Minister. Whilst the ceremony was thus proceeding, sentiments the most painful to the feelings and consciences of the party assembled being uttered, our Brother Thompson, the father of the Bride, and who was standing beside to "give her away," observing the extreme agitation of his daughter, took her by the arm to support her, gently inclining her head from a scene which she appeared incapable of supporting, when Mr. Jones seized her arm and turned her face to the "altar," observing to our Brother Thompson, "You have no right to interfere, Sir."—Who, feelingly replied, "Have I not a right to protect the conscience of *my child* from being violated? You, would do the same in like circumstances!" A conscious conviction of the justice of this reply caused the Minister to falter, and, after a pause, he proceeded in the ceremony, till the parties were ordered to *kneel down*—this our brother and sister refused to do, and our Brother Thompson stated, that they ought not and would not consent to do so. Mr. Jones then said, "You appear ignorant of the law, I will read it to you, for the marriage ceremony is part of an act of parliament." He then read that part of the rubric which directs the parties to *kneel*, and having so done, he demanded peremptorily and again and again of our Brother Dobell, if it was his wish that the ceremony should proceed? Our Brother Dobell, after much hesitation, and under the most painful embarrassment, stated, that he wished the ceremony to proceed, but, that he protested against *kneeling*; this, however, being insisted on, and ultimately acquiesced in, the service continued till the priest pronounced the party to be "Man and Wife," upon which our friends were retiring from the "altar," considering the marriage as then completed, when Mr. Jones insisted they should stay, as the ceremony was not yet over. He then compelled the party a second time to kneel, and went through all the prayers of the service at great length, *the greater part of which we have not heard on other similar occasions, and which it is the usual custom almost wholly to omit.* In these obsolete prayers some parts occurred the indelicacy of which, when delivered in a mixed assembly of the sexes, was not less revolting to every feeling of decency and decorum, than was the early part of the ceremony a violation of our consciences—and, notwithstanding the intimation that had already been given on this point, and though every face was instinctively and with disgust turned away from so revolting an exhibition, the priest with calm confidence, approaching apparently to satisfaction at the pain he was exciting, proceeded AUDIBLY, FORCIBLY, and POINTEDLY, to deliver all the offensive passages. When Mr. Jones had, as he supposed, completed the ceremony and was about to retire from the "altar," our Brother Thompson felt himself called upon to inform the Minister, that the ceremony was not complete according to the *Act of Parliament*, which directed that "*the accustomed fee should be laid on the book.*" He demanded therefore to know what the fee was, and insisted that the same should be paid in the manner prescribed by the rubric. The Minister, under much evident embarrassment, affected to be ignorant of the amount of the fee, and sought the necessary information of the clerk: our Brother Dobell was then informed, that the fee was 19s. 6d. which sum he accordingly "*laid on the book,*" the Minister holding the same in his hand.

"Upon our retiring from the church into the vestry, our Brother Thompson said to the Minister, "Your conduct this day, Mr. Jones, has been most ungentlemanly, ungenerous, and dishonourable. You have outraged and wounded my feelings in the cruelest manner—you have entrapped us into an engagement by which we were to be allowed publicly *and at your own suggestion*, to protest against the ceremony, and then, taking advantage

of our unsuspecting confidence in your honour, you have frustrated the performance of what you yourself had proposed." The other friends also joined in expressing the feelings natural to such an occasion, and Mr. Jones ordered the clerk to request the attendance of the *church warden*, a command, however, which we did not perceive that he obeyed. The Bride (a female under nineteen years of age, and agitated by feelings better to be conceived than described) was then led, or rather supported to the table to sign her name in the registry, her father strengthening her with the exclamation, "Remember what your Master has said—'If ye are persecuted for righteousness' sake, happy are ye!'" Thus ended a scene the most indescribably painful to every feeling whether of conscience, delicacy, or moral dignity, that it has ever fallen to our lot to witness on any similar occasion. Should it, however, still seem meet to the Government of the country to continue to subject us to a ceremony, which, having been derived from the *Popish Mass Book* comes down to us, not only with the false doctrine, but with the false sentiment, obscure customs, mystical allusions, and gross indecency of the times in which it originated, and which may be made more or less painful to our feelings according to the bad taste, bad passions, personal hostility, or illiberal sentiments of the party administering such ceremony, God grant that all our members may have the firmness and constancy to resist and oppose so wicked and degrading an imposition on their consciences."

Signed by the Elder,
and eighteen friends present.

Directing our efforts to a public, a legalized grievance, it will be of little importance to remark upon the total absence of all gentlemanly and honourable conduct exhibited by the West-Ham priest in the instance above recorded. Performed by a decent clergyman, possessed of the common charities of our nature, and yielding, in consequence, in some measure to the scruples of others, the marriage service is sufficiently humiliating to our feelings; but when a malicious, unfeeling man takes advantage of his situation, to insult those over whom he has an accidental controul, and to outrage those notions of religious duty and decency in others, from a sense of which he is himself happily free—painful indeed is the condition of those whose only duty is forbearance! But how broad and palpable an illustration is here presented of the evil of the present system of marriage by compelling conformity to a ceremony of the established church—a system by which an individual, professing to hold a *sacred office*, and to administer a *religious solemnity*, may convert such solemnity into a means of gratifying his personal resentments against those who in his own view are joining with himself in a sacred and religious service in the presence of the Divine Being! The reader is aware how long and with what constancy we have maintained the principle that priests are unauthorized by Christianity—that a separate and distinct order of men in a religious community, claiming

peculiar immunities and privileges as the teachers of Christianity, has been the fruitful cause of all the corruptions of the religion of Jesus. As the characters, also, of men are created by circumstances, we have too generally found that the representatives of this system are such as the system itself might be supposed to engender. In this point of view, *as a priest*, *as one of a class*, the conduct and character of Mr. Jones assumes an importance and claims a notice at our hands, to which personally we should not consider him entitled.

Two features in the conduct of this man, upon the occasion above reported, we cannot pass over without observation; first, then, in an interview with the father of the young woman whom he was called upon to marry, this person *himself proposed* that the intended husband should protest verbally and aloud at the altar, before entering on the ceremony, and then, immediately that our friend was adopting the course so proposed and understood, the priest, with the utmost violence, attempted to baffle, to silence, and to put down our friend, and to prevent his carrying into effect *his own proposition*. And, second, the unfeeling conduct of this individual in going out of his way needlessly and purposely to protract the ceremony, and, *contrary to established practice*, to read every part of the service, for no other reason than because he knew it was offensive to the feelings of the party assembled. It is true that on the interview, as above recorded, this person did *say*, that "he did not consider the marriage legal if any part of the ceremony were omitted," and that, since a former marriage which he had celebrated among us, "he had uniformly, and in all cases, gone through the whole of the ceremony as prescribed in the book of Common Prayer;" but the reader must not give the reverend gentleman the benefit of these assertions, standing, as they do, only on his own evidence, and contradicted, as we shall prove them to be, both by probability and by fact. And first, the practice of not reading the whole of the marriage service is the general practice of most clergymen; and we can trace back the existence of this practice, if required, for nearly a century.* Can it be possible that this person

* Since this sheet was prepared for the press, we have had an opportunity of hearing one of the bishops advert to this practice in terms of implied approbation. On the debate in the House of Lords, June 12, upon the Bill for relieving dissenters from the Marriage Ceremony, to which we shall shortly advert, at the end of this article, Lord Liverpool had suggested the propriety of altering the marriage service in such manner as should make it agreeable to the consciences of dissenters. The Arch-

can believe that all the innumerable marriages so celebrated are *illegal*—that all which he himself has so celebrated are *illegal*—for he admits that the new light that has broke in upon him with reference to this point was since the marriage of a member of our church, in the year 1819? This, certainly, is a very alarming doctrine to his parishioners; and why, it may be asked, does not this scrupulous clerk wrap himself in his surplice, and set about marrying again (*gratis*) all those who, upon his own shewing, he has thus illegally married? But, although it is not so recorded in the above report, this Mr. Jones himself admitted, in the interview with our two friends previous to the marriage, that he omitted that part of the ceremony which directs the fee to be laid on the book; and it will be seen that, but for the interference of our friends, he *would* have omitted it on this very occasion. Now what can such a person mean by asserting that he considers the marriage not legal if *any part* of the ceremony, as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, be omitted; and yet, at the same time, himself omits this part of the ceremony, when it will be found, on turning to the Book of Common Prayer, that the *rubric* as positively directs that “the man shall give unto the woman a ring, *laying the same upon the book, with the accustomed duty to the priest and clerk,*” as does the following *rubric* that “the man, leaving the ring upon the fourth finger of the woman’s left hand, *they shall both kneel down;*” and yet, at the marriage in question, the priest, with unfeeling rudeness, insisted on a compliance with the latter, whilst he was very desirous of dispensing with the

bishop of Canterbury had, in reply, expressed his alarm at the proposition of altering the liturgy of the church to meet the scruples of dissenters; when the Bishop of Worcester, in defence of Lord Liverpool’s proposition, stated that it was not an alteration, but an *omission* of some parts of the marriage ceremony that was intended; and—added his Lordship, emphatically, “Does not every body know that in large and populous parishes *the marriage service is now considerably abridged?*” It answers no purpose to be told that the clergy are directed by the canons to celebrate marriage according to the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, for no person knows better than the Reverend Vicar of West-Ham, who is also chaplain to the Bishop of London, how little the clergy regard the canons of the church; were it otherwise, indeed, we are credibly informed that a well-known “*whist club,*” held at a well-known *ale-house* at West-Ham, would be deprived of one or two of its *clerical members*; for there is a canon which directs that “no ecclesiastical person shall at any time resort to any *taverns or ale-houses,* nor give themselves to drinking or riot, spending their time idly by day or night, playing at dice, cards, or tables, or any other unlawful game.” Our friend, Mr. Rice, also, the good man of St. Luke’s, we are informed, could tell us of an honest landlord, at the sign of ———, who would lose “a *regular parlour customer,*” if the above canon were scrupulously enforced.

former; and did, in fact, actually omit it at *the time*, and *part of the service*, in which, by the rubric, it is directed to take place.

Not having been present, and being unacquainted with any who have been present, at any marriages celebrated by this gentleman since the year 1819, we cannot *prove* that on these occasions he has omitted a great portion of the ceremony, but we can *believe* that he has so done; and our readers also will believe it, when they are informed that this person's curate, for whose acts he is responsible, has, and that in the present year, in the performance of the office of matrimony, omitted a great part of the service. It may be said, to be sure, that the curate is not the rector. Certainly not: but will any one seriously assert, that, if the rector had discovered that all marriages were *illegal* unless the whole service were performed, he would not immediately have instructed *his curate* and *representative* therein, in order to have guarded, in future, against illegal marriages. And yet it is a fact, that Mr. Burford, the curate—the agent of this Mr. Jones—did, on the 8th day of January last, marry a gentleman of the Unitarian persuasion, in the parish church of West-Ham, on which occasion he *omitted at least one third part of the marriage service as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer*. Let then the assertion of the pious vicar—that he considered marriage *illegal*, unless the whole of the ceremony were performed, receive the credit which it deserves, and establish to the whole world the veracity of his character. Far, indeed, from us be the wish to interrupt either the present honours, or to forestall the posthumous fame which the record of these transactions may attach to the West-Ham clerk. Nor will it be attended either with envy or regret on our part, should the celebrity of his reverend predecessor, whose virtues stand recorded at “Tyburn Tree,” rest upon him, and cleave to his name like the leprosy of Naaman to the false Gehazi, and his seed, for ever!!*

Turning from the contemplation of the conduct above exhibited we readily confess to the reader that we have, on other and similar occasions, met with instances of the most polite and liberal treatment from individuals of the clergy. One such with pleasure we record, in the way of example, as extracted from our church books; the name and date the

* The celebrated Dr. Dodd, who was executed for forgery, was minister of West-Ham. He was also a great supporter of the *public charities* of his day, and author of a very *obscene* novel, called “The Sisters.”

reader will pardon us for omitting, lest even the virtues of the individual in question should prove "holy traitors" to his security and peace.

"The elder and friends present at the marriage of our brother _____ of the London branch, and our sister _____ of the _____ branch of the church of God, have briefly to report, that the marriage was performed on _____, the _____, at the parish church of _____. That Mr. _____, attending for the curate, performed the ceremony; that, on the usual protest being presented, he received and cursorily read it over, and (referring to the previous explanations which our brother _____ had given of his scruples and intentions) he asked the parties to be married if they had any thing further to say. Our friend _____ then verbally stated his conscientious objections to the ceremony, which the parties were by law compelled to join in, and the minister immediately proceeded.

The minister, respecting our conscientious scruples, appeared desirous to make the ceremony as short as he could, consistently with the duty he had himself to perform. When he came to the objectionable passages, "With my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," he pronounced the words himself, and then passed on without waiting for, or requiring that our brother _____ should, as is usual in such cases, repeat them. Having read the declarations that the parties were man and wife, he wholly omitted the prayers, and the remaining part of the ceremony; thus avoiding for himself, as well as for us, the painful and humiliating mockery of devotion, which, in the case of conscientious dissenters, must attend the repetition. Impressed with the propriety of the behaviour of this gentleman, we took occasion to thank him, and to express our respect for his liberal and conscientious conduct."

Signed by the Elder,
and eight friends present.

Observation here is scarcely necessary, but the contrast between the two gentlemen last noticed is so striking that, when we call to mind the violent, unfeeling conduct of the one, with the conciliatory, conscientious course of the others—the fierce look, the impassioned tone, the violent gesture of the former, with the mild manners, the meek demeanour, and the kind consideration of the latter—we more than suspect that "*THIS man went down to his house justified rather than the former.*"

Since the period that Mr. Smith first brought his bill into the House of Commons we have, in common with the Unitarians, again petitioned the two houses of parliament for relief; and we have been eagerly watching each succeeding session, from 1819 to 1822, in the hope that the honourable member for Norwich would have renewed his motion. Upon the reasons or necessity of the delay that took place it is not for us to pronounce, as we are aware that the subject is one of extensive and complicated bearings, and the promoters of the measure for relief have,

cause, it is gratifying to note the progress of liberal opinions and to mark what important advantages may be achieved by the meanest instruments. When first our friends undertook to protest against the marriage ceremony the leading daily journals refused to publish their Protests at any price; but, on occasion of the marriages just celebrated, these protests were eagerly caught at as articles of intelligence, and published in most of the respectable papers, free of all charge. When, also, our church first attempted to draw attention to the objections against the marriage ceremony the subject was passed over by the great body of dissenters, and scarcely regarded even by the most enlightened. Since that time they have seen the subject taken up, not only by the Unitarians, but by the ministers of the three denominations of dissenters, and more recently by the catholics of England. The subject has assumed an admitted and fixed importance; it has occupied the attention of the House of Commons, and, in the present session of parliament, our claims have been submitted to a committee of the Lords, which committee, though it has not decided upon granting us immediate relief, has, through the medium of its chairman, delivered a report to the House which cannot but be considered as favourable to our claims.

Upon the question—whether marriage be a civil contract only, or a religious institution—we have purposely abstained entering; nor have we offered any exact plan of our own as to the best mode of relief, from a conviction that neither our views or wishes on this part of the question, are likely to prevail in the quarter from whence relief must come. Those, however, who wish to see the mode by which the marriage contract has been carried into effect in a catholic country, may consult, with advantage, the Code Napoleon, chap. 2, art. 165. The provisions with regard to the previous publication of marriage, the consent of parents, the necessity of witnesses, &c., are much the same as are enjoined by the law of England; but it is enacted that “marriage shall be celebrated publicly “before the *civil officer* of the domicile of one of the two “parties.” On the other hand, if it be considered in this country indispensable to maintain a religious celebration of marriage—for that very reason, because it is religious, it ought to be consistent with the consciences of those who submit to it. A religious act contrary to one’s religious belief is a monstrous anomaly in legislation; it is impossible in fact; it is wicked even in pretence; and, as a principle, it is abhorrent to the whole spirit of the gospel!!

Since we had concluded the above, the Marquis of Lansdown, as will be seen by the daily prints, has brought in a Bill for the relief of Dissenters from the Marriage Ceremony. This bill is the same which we have last noticed, and with its provisions we should have felt ourselves satisfied. We were present at the debate in the Lords, (June 12,) upon the motion that the bill should go into a committee; and, although the bill has been lost for the present session, as indeed, on account of the lateness of the period of bringing it in might have been anticipated, we cannot but think that the probability of ultimate success is considerably advanced. The debate which this bill produced was in every point of view so important, that we shall endeavour, in our next, to furnish our readers with a correct report, those in the daily papers being very imperfect, and failing to convey a correct impression of the character of the discussion. The Marquis of Lansdown made a manly and noble appeal in favour of the rights of conscience. Lord Liverpool declared that "*the argument for the object of the bill was unanswerable.*" Lord Ellenborough, and other noble lords, maintained the same position. Even the Lord Chancellor, though he strongly opposed the second reading of the bill at that period of the sessions, admitted that some relief ought to be granted to dissenters; and, though he objected to the *mode* of relief proposed by the bill, professed his willingness, if it pleased God to spare his life to another session, to assist in furthering some approved method of relief. There was a strong muster of bishops in the house, several of whom delivered their sentiments on the bill. We were not particularly impressed with any thing strikingly cogent in argument, or candid in principle, or captivating in style, that proceeded from the right reverend bench; one prelate only, the Bishop of Worcester, supported the second reading of the bill; but none of the bishops ventured to dispute the justice of the object as claimed by Unitarian dissenters. Upon a division of the house, there were FIFTEEN for the second reading, and FIFTEEN against it; the proxies then being added, gave a majority of six only against going into a committee; so that the bill was lost by a majority of six persons who had not heard the arguments by which it was supported. And, even in this case, its fate might have been different, if it had occurred to the bishops that, in a case in which *they are parties*—upon a question whether they, *the bishops*, shall continue to possess an authority over the consciences of us, *the dissenters*, it would have been esteemed by the public as equally delicate and

candid if they had abstained from voting! The Marquis of Lansdown, with a promptitude which is the true evidence of sincerity, gave notice to the house, on the following evening, of his intention to renew his motion in favour of dissenters at an *early* period of the next sessions of parliament!!

THE YEAR.

Continued from page 121.

BESIDE the hearth the heathen placed his gods
 Domestic; there they ruled the homely scene,
 Shedding their influence; baneful oft and fierce;—
 Licentious—wrathful—source of varied crimes!
 —For man affects the attributes of heaven,
 And *is*—what he believes his God to *be*.
 So pagan ruffians, in the name of Christ,
 Light Persecution's torch;—so Calvin taught
 A wrathful God;—then steeped his hand in blood.—
 A cruel faith—in works befitting proved!
 The Christian worships too beside his hearth—
 A reasonable service;—there he seeks,
 With humble imitation, to observe
 His attributes who made him—and combines
 The duties with the happiness of life;
 Rears a bless'd altar; sacrifices there
 True offerings—in that holiest temple—HOME!

There is a sacred influence in that sound,
 A talismanic virtue—that calls up
 Sweet thoughts—and images of peace and joy.
 Home! that safe shelter from a world of cares!
 That peaceful haven from the storms of life!
 The gourd within whose shadow Nature spreads
 Her freshest verdure, sheds her sweetest bloom;
 Where all the best affections of the heart
 Spring up and flourish. That enchanted ring—
 To vulgar sight invisible—where dance
 The fairy forms of Pleasure—truest called—
 Pure Innocence and Faithfulness unchanged;
 Affection, with her train of infant loves;
 Whilst Piety, on Virtue's lap reclined,
 Smiles o'er the scene;—these cheerful revel there
 'Mid the mild moon-beams of domestic joy.

How good—how noble—how revered—how great
 The man—not flying from the cares of life,
 But filling all its duties—who sits down
 (Firmly resolved, yet patiently resigned)
 At *home*—and calls it peace;—who looks around
 And his eye dwells on other eyes that speak
 Mutual, with him, esteem—affection—love—
 Connubial love—the truest—chastest—best !
 Who folds to a fond bosom (firm though fond)
 The children of his heart, by him upreared
 In paths of truth; or views his younger race,
 As yet unformed, but bursting into life
 (Buds on the green wreath of eternity)
 And, in their infant gambols, tastes a bliss,
 Purer than passion's wildest votaries know.
 Friendship for him has charms—that sacred bond
 That much abused and much neglected name,
 Among the highest virtues of our kind;
 And piety not less;—the love of God
 Whose fruit is love, benevolence to all.
 Not a state pageant; not obtruded alms
 At sound of trumpet flung to fawning crowds—
 Bestowed and ta'en 'mid all the pomp of praise—
 But that sweet music of the mind which meets
 And vibrates at each sound of others woe.
 Which, struck by bounties of indulgent heaven,
 Breaks joyous, like the Theban lyre, that played
 To each arising sun-beam. Piety
 Hath pleasures which the bigot dreams not of.
 The Christian tastes them at the well of life,
 And finds his pastures watered by the stream.

Society to such a mind has charms
 And solitude a use—which prouder men
 See not or pass regardless and unclaimed.
 Truth has to such a heart a higher worth,
 Knowledge a nobler aim, and Science comes
 Hallowed and sanctified to it's true end—
 His praise—the architect—who framed the skies—
 Whose mind creates—upholds and governs all;—
 Whose plans to guess men deem philosophy--
 Well pleased to seek—and best employed to praise.

(*To be continued.*)

NOTICES.

THE following Subjects are appointed by the Church of God, denominated Freethinking Christians, for the instruction of the Public on the Sunday Mornings, at their Meeting-house, Crescent, Jewin Street, Aldersgate Street.—The Business commences at Eleven o'Clock **PRECISELY.**

July 6.—The character of Moses, with a view to shew his fitness for the circumstances in which he was placed, and the objects he had to accomplish.

July 13.—On Marriage, and the present Marriage Ceremony.

July 20.—The doctrines of the Trinity and of Transubstantiation compared.

July 27.—Unitarianism compared with Christianity.

August 3d.—The Constitution and Discipline of the Christian Church.

August 10th.—The grounds of the Reformation from Popery in the sixteenth century, and the necessity of completing it by reverting to the principles taught by Jesus and his apostles.

August 17th.—An explanation of scripture difficulties—Joshua and the sun standing still—Sampson—the witch of Endor—Jonah in the whale's belly.

August 24th.—Death-bed Repentance.

August 31st.—The character of Paul—with a view to shew his fitness for the peculiar objects he had to accomplish, and to explain how far he becomes an example to the Christian in the present day.

Sept. 7th.—The nature of Sacrifice.

Sept. 14th.—A Review of the moral Government of the Deity.

Sept. 21st.—The scripture doctrines of Heaven and Hell.

Sept. 28th.—Popular religion compared with the principles laid down in the New Testament.

MRS. FRY AND THE QUAKERS.

The notice which was taken in our last number of this distinguished lady has moved a Quaker gentleman to undertake her defence. Although it is far from our intention to render our pages a vehicle for individual controversy, yet, as the letter of our correspondent speaks the sentiments of a large class of the community, with regard to Mrs. Fry's public services, we purpose in our next publishing this letter, together with a full exposition of the principles, pharasaical spirit, and political subserviency of **MODERN QUAKERISM.**

We are gratified to find our labours approved by our correspondent from Gloucestershire.

On the Creation and Fall of Man, Essay II. together with other important articles which have been delayed on account of the space occupied in our present number by Dissenters' Marriages, will appear in our next.

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THE
FREETHINKING
CHRISTIANS'
QUARTERLY REGISTER.

ON RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

ESSAY IV.

THE JEWS—THEIR TABERNACLE WORSHIP.

“What is man?

Where must he find his Maker? with what rites

Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?

Or does he sit regardless of his works?

—’Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts.”—*Cowper’s Task, Book II.*

IN our former Essay the point was established, from a reference to the passages of scripture bearing upon the subject, that public social prayer was not commanded by Deity, or practised without such command at the creation of man, or at any time throughout the patriarchal ages. We have now to proceed another step in the investigation, and to enquire—*Was this practice instituted by Moses, or was it afterwards, by divine direction, introduced into the tabernacle, or temple worship?*

The advocates of prayer—performed socially and in public—and (in these respects) distinct from the prayer of the closet, do not pretend to adduce in its favour the command either of Jesus or his apostles. They admit that they do not find the practice instituted in the New Testament; and the most learned and the most competent amongst them are likewise compelled to confess that it is equally without warrant from the writings of the Old.

Dr. Prideaux (himself an advocate of social prayer; and more than any other writer quoted in support of its observance) allows, that the Jews, “*till after the Babylonish captivity had*

"not any set forms of prayer" (Connection, vol. 3, p. 382); and adds—after speaking of the devotions of the people at the temple, during the time of sacrifice—"neither had these any public forms to pray by, nor any public ministers to officiate to them herein; but all prayed **IN PRIVATE, TO THEMSELVES, AND ALL ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN PRIVATE CONCEPTIONS.**" Here it is conceded that their prayers, although made in a public place, were strictly *individual*, all praying "*in private to themselves,*" and each, of course, according to their several wants and dispositions; knowing (to use the language of Solomon on this very subject) "*every man the plague of his own heart.*" The parable of the publican and the pharisee, also, affords Dr. Prideaux an apt and striking illustration in support of this position; and supplies us with an argument not the less strong, because it is incidental, in confirmation of our views upon the same subject. Dr. Priestley also, in a work expressly written in support of public social prayer, makes, on this part of the subject, the following remarkable concession,—"*In the usual mode of worship, among the Jews, the people prayed in the great court of the temple, at the time that the priests were offering incense in the holy place, EACH PERSON PRAYING FOR HIMSELF.*"*

These concessions, supported as they may easily be by the most ample proof from the scriptures, present, it may be observed, not only direct proof that the practice was never adopted by the Jews, but, in the way of inference, afford a strong argument against the abstract propriety of the practice at any time, and, particularly so, against its performance in the present age. Prayer in public, and socially performed, is a form or ceremony. If, therefore, ordained by Deity at all, it certainly, from the very nature of things, would have been ordained by him under the Mosaic dispensation, rather than at a later period, and as part of a more enlightened system. Was Judaism more mental, more spiritual, more retiring in its practice and discipline, than Christianity? Surely not; yet such it would appear to be in the views of the writers above quoted, and of others who coincide in their views; for while they describe the children of Israel as free, in reference to prayer, from "*public forms,*" and each "*praying for himself in private, and according to his own conceptions,*" they make it the boast and the duty of the Christian to submit to the slavery of "*public forms*"—to

* Letters to a Young Man, occasioned by Mr. Wakefield's Essay on Social Prayer.—By Joseph Priestley.

do worse, indeed, than returning to the beggarly elements of ceremonies; for they call on him to adopt a public, regular, and formal mode of prayer, to which even the Jewish people never submitted! Is this correct?—is this rational?—is this consistent with enlightened views of the principles of Christianity?

The tendency of this argument has been perceived, and the necessity of proving, above all things, that the Jews practised social prayer, has been strongly felt. Writers, indeed, and some of them individuals whom we might expect to have found better advised, have hazarded some bold assertions on this subject.

Lewis, in his *Hebrew Antiquities*,* in speaking of the temple service, thus expresses himself: "*It is certain that prayers were daily put up, together with their offerings; and though we have very few constitutions concerning them, yet the constant practice of the Jewish church, and the particular forms of prayer yet extant in their writings, are a sufficient evidence. FOR THIS PURPOSE THEY HAD LITURGIES, OR PRESCRIBED FORMS, WHICH MAY BE PROVED TO BE IN USE FROM THE VERY INFANCY OF THE HEBREW NATION.*"—Vol. ii. p. 431. A similar position has been maintained by some of the more modern authors, who would appear, indeed, to derive much of their information, and their argument, from the laborious writer above quoted. Mr. John Pope, in his reply to Gilbert Wakefield,† professes to find the practice of public social prayer in every stage of the progress of the Jews as a nation (see chap. iii.); and Mr. Thomas Moore, in his recently published "*Inquiry into the Scriptural Authority for Social Worship*," affirms that he is "*able to prove that social prayer was a practice with which the ancient Jews were familiar;*" that, "*from the infancy of their nation, they were accustomed to it;*" the "*entire service of the temple*" (prayer having been stated as an essential part of that service) "*being not only public but AS SOCIAL AS POSSIBLE.*"—(See pages 29, 32, 56, 58, 146, and others.)

These assertions go full to the point; proof alone is

* *Origines Hebrææ, the Antiquities of the Hebrew Republic.*—By Thomas Lewis, M. A. 4 vols. 8vo. London, 1724.

† *Divine Worship, founded on Nature and supported by Scripture Authority, an Essay; with remarks on Mr. Wakefield's Arguments against Public Worship.*—By John Pope, Tutor in the Belles Lettres and Classical Literature in the New College, Hackney, London, 1792

wanting to their support. If the Jews practised social prayer "*from the infancy of their nation,*" the practice must have been commanded them by Deity: let the command be pointed out to us. If the Jews adopted prayer, "*not only public, but as social as possible,*" as part of the institutions of their temple worship, let the institution be pointed out to us. Lewis, or Moore, possessed, or possess, on this subject no peculiar sources of information; they could, or they should, only have drawn their inferences from the Bible; and *we* too have the Bible before us, from which to draw *our* inferences, and on which to found *our* opinions. *In which book, then, we ask, in what chapter, and in what verse, do they find the institution of public social prayer as a religious ordinance given to the Jewish people?* Theirs, it has been frequently asserted, (though, perhaps, with some little incorrectness of expression) was a religion of forms and ceremonies; many such, indeed, expressly commanded and ordained by Deity, we find recorded in the writings of the Old Testament; and (as must ever be the case with mere ordinances, which are of arbitrary appointment, and not founded on any general principles, either moral or physical) instructions the most precise, the most particular, the most minute, are there given them with regard to those forms and ceremonies. All their feasts and holidays are ordained; all their religious officers are appointed; all their forms and ceremonies are described to the minutest particular. Page after page is filled with descriptions, down even to the very dresses of the priests, with details as to the nature and circumstances of their sacrifices; the day—the hour—the person—each is defined; nothing is left to surmise, or to conjecture. *Where then, we ask, is the appointment, where the description, where the details, of public social prayer?* It cannot be said that this was too unimportant an institution to need such precision; for its defenders, as we shall see hereafter, contend for its efficacy as superior even to that of any other ordinance, or religious ceremony; it cannot be argued that command and direction were unnecessary here, for they are here more necessary than on any other subject. Public social prayer, the combined act of a multitude, can only exist by command or by previous concert. This is so much the case that the Prayer Book of the church of England, with its rubric of instruction for the priest and people, forms, at this day, a volume of itself, and is established and defined by an act of the legislature. The public prayers of the modern Jews, with the various ordinances for the observance of the priests and the

people, extend to no less than six octavo volumes. Something of this kind is, indeed, inevitable; where there is prayer, "*not only public, but as social as possible*," (as Mr. Moore says was the case in the Jewish temple) even whether there is, or not, the constant use "*of liturgies and prescribed forms*," there *must* be found some command from the founder of the church; some constitution in the law of the church; and the fullest particulars of the words to be used, the forms to be observed, and the persons by whom the whole is to be administered. Certainly, if public social prayer were the practice of the Jewish people, not only in their temple, but from the infancy of their nation; certainly, to say the least, we may look for *as full* particulars, in the Jewish writings, respecting this practice, as respecting sacrifice, or any other of their observances whatever. From the nature of the thing we are justified in expecting this. If it had been commanded by Jehovah, the command would, doubtless, have been recorded, impressively, at length. If it had been practised by the Jewish people, the practice would no doubt have been frequently narrated and enlarged upon; and, above all, if it had been instituted as a part of the temple service, the fullest particulars as to the words, the manner, and the parties by whom to be administered, would have been clearly, perhaps repeatedly, given. Many persons, in the habit of practising and defending social prayer, have never, perhaps, suspected, what nevertheless is strictly the case, that throughout the books of the Old and the New Testament, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelations, there is not one single passage which contains a command for the observance of public social prayer, either by the way of liturgies and responses, or extemporaneously, one man praying as the mouth-piece, or organ of the assembly.

With regard to the Jews, will it be said that they practised prayer *without* a command from Deity? Did they, in this instance, depart from the model which was delivered by Jehovah to Moses upon the mount? Did they, by the adoption of this unauthorized practice, disobey the express command given them, "*ye shall not add unto the word which I command ye*?" These are important questions, as concerning the Jews of old; but there is another, to us of more importance, because affecting our own temporal and eternal interests. Provided it should appear that they, the Jews, were thus guilty, shall *we* imitate them in their disobedience, or their will-worship? The facts, however, are—in the first place,

that the command was never given to the Jews ; and, in the second, that they did not practise the thing in question, even without a command.

Although no command be pleaded, an attempt is yet made, indirectly and by inference, to prove that social prayer, as now practised, was familiar to the Jewish people, and formed a part of their tabernacle and temple worship. Indirectly, we may truly say ; because the proposition is founded upon the conduct of this people, on extraordinary occasions, when assembled for political objects, and *not* for the purpose of religious worship at all ; because it has been defended by a reference to their national songs, and to the praises and thanksgivings of the levites, who, in no instance, are represented as offering up *prayers* socially, or with the people ; and *inferentially*, because, frequent though unsuccessful attempts have been made to prove that the observances in question existed in the synagogues ; places of meeting, respecting which we have no evidence that they were of divine institution, but the presence of Jesus at which, has been construed into a full and complete approval of the practice ; although, as we shall have occasion to see, he actually condemned the *only* kind of prayer there practised, namely, public *individual* prayer. All these possible cases will, however, be met by the course of inquiry into which we are now entering ; proposing, successively, to inquire whether social prayer was practised, either with or without a divine command, in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the synagogues, or elsewhere, by the Jewish people. It has been already conceded, that should it appear that social prayer *was* thus the practice of the Jews, a probability might hence be raised that it was introduced into Christianity as a thing in itself reasonable, and which had received the previous sanction of the Deity ; although it is evident that many—we might, indeed, say all the merely outward observances of the Jewish worship were superseded at the destruction of the temple. But, if it should appear that the Jews did *not* practise social prayer at all, in either of the above-named modes or places, our case will then, indeed, be a strong one ; as, in order to make out even the shadow of a reason for considering it as binding upon Christians, the express command and ordinance of Jesus, or his apostles, must *then* be produced.

In order properly to understand the nature of the Jewish worship it will be necessary that we should first inquire, as briefly as the case will admit, into the nature of that covenant, into which Deity had condescended to enter with

the children of Israel; and, with a view to which, all the forms and ceremonies of their religious, more particularly of their *public* religious worship, were framed and modelled. The expectation that they should be a chosen and peculiar people may be traced back to the days of Abraham. "*And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy children will I give this land.*" (Gen. xii. 7, 8.) A promise which was successively confirmed to his son and his son's son, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. xxxv. 9); and the hope of which appears to have been preserved amongst them throughout their Egyptian bondage, "*And God spake unto Moses, and said, I am the Lord; and I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant; and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and I will bring you into the land, concerning which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*" (Ex. vi. 2.) The people, we are told, on this unexpected hope of freedom and future prosperity, being conveyed to them by Moses and Aaron, "*believed when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he looked upon the children of Israel; then they bowed their heads and worshipped.*" This, however, we may, by the way, observe, was certainly not by means of stated social prayer; still less did they make use of a "liturgy," or of "prescribed forms," on the occasion; it was the sudden impulse of spontaneous feeling, which would have equally burst forth from any assembled multitude of bondsmen, towards the Being who should promise them deliverance, whether that being were human or divine. If it be asked, did not the people pray on this occasion? Our answer is, we cannot tell—for nothing is said upon the subject. Their prayer, if they did offer up supplications, was doubtless, as we shall see on other similar occasions, individual, "each praying for himself." All, however, that we are told is that "*they bowed their heads and worshipped;*" that is, shewed external marks of reverence. That prayer to God is not necessarily included in the *worship* of the children of Israel, is evident from this; that on another occasion it is said that they "*worshipped God AND THE KING.*" We shall have occasion, in a future Essay, to notice several other cases, in the history of the same people, which have been mistakenly adduced as instances of stated and social religious worship, which were, in fact, nothing more than the natural and uncontrollable effusions of present joy, or sorrow; of political and national feeling. We pass on, however, to the history

resided; "the priests, and levites, being the more immediate and stated attendants on his presence—to whom the execution of the law was, in many cases, committed; and who were, therefore, properly ministers of state, and of civil government, as well as religion."—(Jennings, p. 13.)

Not for the purpose of publicity, therefore, and not with a view to a social form of prayer—but because they believed that their God and King was especially present in the ark of the covenant—did the Jews regard that ark as sacred; assemble before it to hear the divine will; approach it to consult in times of danger or difficulty; and finally, pray before or towards it, with an expectation, from the promises made to them, that such prayer would be successful and efficacious. Referring to that portion of our question which asks, whether social prayer was "instituted by Moses, or afterwards, by divine direction, introduced into the tabernacle worship?" we will now, with a view to that inquiry, proceed to an examination of the chief passages of scripture, and a review of the best authorities as to what really constituted the tabernacle worship.

"*Ye have seen*" (was the language of the Lord to Moses, Ex. xx. 22.) "*that I have talked with you from heaven. An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and shall sacrifice thereon. In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*" The ark, at first deposited in the tabernacle, was, in an especial manner, one of these appointed places. Its formation was expressly commanded for that very purpose—"Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." "And they shall make an ark of shittim wood, and thou shalt put the mercy-seat above the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee; and then will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." (Ex. xxv. 10, 21.) The language, here and elsewhere used, on the subject of Deity, is, it may, in passing, be observed, in some respects inconsistent with the more enlightened views now, from the influence of revelation, prevailing on the subject. Even in the earliest periods of revelation the most enlightened ideas were taught respecting the omniscience and omnipresence of God; yet some difficulty in speaking, or writing on this subject must always arise from the imperfection of human language, and its inadequacy to this "*high argument*;" and, in addition, much allowance, in these ages of darkness,

once, of political government and of religious worship (a form, indeed, in which, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, both were combined) necessarily arose. This has been termed a theocracy, or government with God for its head; the peculiar features of which have, for our present purpose, been sufficiently well described, by Jennings, as follows:—

“To them Deity stood in a three-fold relation: *First*, as their CREATOR, in common with the rest of mankind. *Secondly*, he was their GOD, as they were a visible church, separated from all the nations of the earth to be his peculiar people; in this character he prescribed the peculiar forms, and distinguishing rites and ceremonies of their religious worship. *Thirdly*, he was their proper KING, the sovereign of their body politic; in which character he gave them judicial or political laws, relating to government and civil life; he ordered a royal palace to be built for his residence among them—I mean the tabernacle, in which he dwelt; or manifested his special presence by the *shechinah*, as the Jews call it; that is, by a bright cloud or glory appearing over the mercy-seat, betwixt the two cherubims, in the innermost room of that palace: from thence he gave forth oracles, or signified his will concerning matters of importance to the state, which were not determined by the body of written laws, Lev. i. 1.” “By the oracle, or by Jehovah himself, all laws were enacted; war was proclaimed and magistrates were appointed; in which three things the *summa potestas*, or sovereign authority of any state consisteth.” “Now these laws are an evidence that Jehovah acted as their KING, as well as their God; since they contain a number of forensic, as well as moral and ceremonial precepts; relating to their civil polity and government, to their magistrates and judges, their estates and inheritance, their trade and commerce; and even to the form of their houses, their food, and their apparel. God enacted all their laws, and no power was vested in any one else, either to make new, or repeal old ones.”—(Jewish Antiquities, B. i. c. 1.)

In connection with our present subject, of social prayer, two or three remarks on the above occur to be made. In looking at the laws and practices of the Mosaic dispensation, it will be frequently necessary to draw a distinction between their political and their religious institutions; between, if we may so express it, that obedience which they paid to Jehovah as their monarch, and that worship which they offered him as their God. Chiefly resulting from the former of these—their belief that Deity had especially condescended to become their monarch, or political ruler—sprung their belief in his peculiar, and as it were, personal presence amongst them. Hence many circumstances in their observances, religious as well as political, in which this people cannot, by possibility, be an object of imitation by any other people, not similarly circumstanced. Their public worship, in the tabernacle and the temple, was evidently of this description; these were, indeed, what they have emphatically been called by many writers, *the tent and the palace* in which their king

Though somewhat quaintly expressed, there would appear much force and truth in this last position; it explains the whole essence of the Jewish worship, all the external observances of which were founded upon this idea of the local and peculiar presence of their God and King. The whole description, indeed, completely accords with the views we hold on this subject; inasmuch as we are here expressly told, that this tabernacle was "*called the tabernacle of the congregation NOT BECAUSE THIS WAS THE PLACE WHERE THE PEOPLE MET TOGETHER FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, BUT BECAUSE GOD THERE MET WITH MEN, AND REVEALED HIS WILL TO THEM.*"*

The belief and practice of the Jews with regard to their tabernacle may, indeed, be reduced to the three following propositions:

1. That they considered Jehovah, whom they regarded as their King, or ruler, as well as their God, or creator, as locally present in an especial and miraculous manner, over the ark, which was deposited in the tabernacle.

2. That from the mercy-seat, as from a visible throne, their laws, in the first instance, proceeded; and, that in consequence of an express covenant to that effect, they, or their rulers, were permitted to approach the throne, for the purpose of holding communion with their monarch, of consulting him in times of emergency, and of seeking advice and instruction from him, when they were exposed to difficulty and danger.

3. That, arising out of this peculiar presence, and as a part of this covenanted permission to consult their monarch, then supposed seated here, on his visible throne, they were directed constantly to offer sacrifices and offerings before him, for which ceremonial purposes, priests and levites were appointed; and that, arising out of the same idea of a peculiar presence, they appear, not unfrequently, to have prayed, or offered up petition there, either each man for himself, or the high priest for the whole nation (none beside of whom were necessarily present), and never socially either by a liturgy, or by an extemporaneous form, delivered, as amongst

* To the same effect, Jennings, previously to a detailed description of the tabernacle of Moses, states that it was "built for God, by his express command, partly to be a palace of his presence, as the king of Israel, Ex. xl. 34, 35; and partly to be the medium of the most solemn public worship which the people were to pay to him, v. 26, 29;" to which passage, if the reader will refer, he will find that the public worship referred to is *not* public social prayer, or, indeed, prayer at all, but the burning of incense, and the offering of meat offerings and burnt offerings.

modern dissenters, by one man as the joint prayer of an assembled multitude.

As the establishment of these facts will fully bear us out in our main proposition, that it was not for the purpose of prayer, public and social, and "*in the manner now in use,*" that the Jews appeared before the tabernacle, but that they did so for reasons arising out of their own peculiar belief and circumstances, in which they can be for us, who are differently circumstanced, no parallel or example,—we shall proceed to an examination of those passages of scripture which chiefly illustrate these points.

On the first point—the foundation of all the rest—their belief in a local presence of Jehovah, between the cherubim, we have already seen the language of Deity, as communicated through Moses to the Jewish people. To the same effect many other passages might be adduced. After the completion of the tabernacle, the priests having been sanctified, or set apart for the purposes of offering and sacrifice, we are told (Ex. xl. 34) that "*then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*" (See also Num. xvi. 19.) From various passages in the book of Judges it is evident that the Jews, when fixed in the promised land, continued to believe in this peculiar presence. Of Elkanah, the husband of Hannah, we learn (1 Sam. i. 3 and 21) that he and all his house went up, out of his city, yearly to worship, to offer his vow, and to sacrifice, unto the Lord of hosts, in Shiloh, the tabernacle being then in that place. The whole narration of the various removals of the ark bears reference to this same principle—confirms the same fact. The removal of the ark from Shiloh, and its being carried to battle against the Philistines; the fall of the idol Dagon, and the other extraordinary circumstances which attended its capture; its return to Kirjath-Jearim, and its being finally deposited by David with triumph and rejoicing:* all these events bear particular reference to the belief in the local presence, and can only be explained by a reference to that belief. Even Solomon himself, previous to the building of his temple, we find (1 Kings iii. 15) "*coming to Jerusalem, and standing before the ark of the covenant of the Lord,*" as it were in the presence of God, "*and offering up burnt offerings.*" In the same spirit the Psalmist exclaims (Ps. xcix. 5) "*Exalt ye the Lord our God, AND WORSHIP AT HIS FOOTSTOOL, for he is holy.*" And again, "*In Judah is God known; his*

* See particularly 1 Sam. chapters iv. v. vi. & vii.; and 2 Sam. chap. vi.

"name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion." (Ps. lxxvi. 1).*

This naturally brings us to the second point; that, in consequence of a direct covenant to that effect, they approached the mercy-seat for the purpose of communion with Deity—seeking advice and counsel in times of difficulty and danger. It has been well observed that, even in an early period of the mission of Moses, when he was advised by Jethro to appoint a number of inferior officers, he did not propose that it should be done without a special order from Jehovah; "*If thou shalt do this thing, AND GOD COMMAND THEE SO, then shalt thou be able to endure,*" &c. Ex. xviii. 23. "Thus likewise" (observes Jennings, B. i. c. 1) "when any doubt arose about the meaning of any law, which God had already given, or when any case occurred which the law had not expressly provided for, Jehovah himself must be consulted about it, as in the case of those who were defiled by a dead body, and, therefore, could not keep the passover on the day appointed, (Num. ix. 6.) In the case of the sabbath breaker, Num. xv. 34; and of Zelophehad's daughter, about the right of inheritance, Num. xxvii. 5. From which instances" (remarks this writer) "it plainly appears that God stood in the peculiar relation to the Israelites of their King, as well as their God." One or two cases in illustration of the same point may require a more particular elucidation. The first we shall refer to is that of Moses. The people had been seduced to worship the molten calf, in the wilderness, and the Lord had in consequence declared (Ex. xxxii. 34) that he would "*visit their sin upon them,*" and (xxxiii. 3) would "*not go up to the land in the midst of them;*" that is, would withdraw from them his peculiar presence and protection. At this time of mourning and terror it is, we are told, (v. 7) that they resolved to "*seek the Lord in the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.*" "*And it came to pass when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that the people rose up and stood, every one at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.*" "*And it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the*

* It is recorded (1 Kings, i. 50) of Adonijah, who had sought to be king, and who, therefore, "*feared because of Solomon,*" that he "*arose, and went and caught hold of the horns of the altar;*" evidently because the place was regarded as holy on account of the peculiar presence of God—because, to use an expression applied in modern times to less holy palaces, it had become a sanctuary.

“ *cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door, and all the people*” (struck no doubt with awe, remorse and terror) “ *rose up and worshipped,*” (shewed or expressed reverence) “ *every man in his tent door; and the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.*” Here let it be observed, the communion or intercourse with Deity is on the part of the individual Moses, not of the whole Israelitish people. He speaks in the first person, in their behalf, indeed, but not in their stead. “ *Now therefore*” (he says, v. 13) “ *if I have found grace in thy sight, shew ME now thy way, that I may know thee, and consider that this nation is thy people.*” Of social prayer here is no sign whatever. It may, perhaps, be suggested that “ *the people—all the people rose up and worshipped.*” Some may, perhaps, think this would have been an excellent occasion for the repetition of one of those “ *liturgies or prescribed forms,*” which they are said to have used “ *from the very infancy of their nation.*” The fact however is, that prayer, and least of all social prayer, is not here at all referred to. The people worshipped, that is, shewed signs of respect or reverence, at the visible appearance of that God, whose displeasure, they knew, they had justly incurred by their idolatry and disobedience. Such, surely, of all others, was not the time either to compose, or to borrow, a cold and formal liturgy, or to employ one man, as an organ or a mouth-piece, to express the feelings and the prayers of the assembly.

The next instance of consultation with Deity to which we shall refer, is that in which the children of Israel, in the time of Joshua, had, in consequence of a trespass which had been committed, been defeated by the men of Ai. (Joshua, vii. 5.) The successor of Moses immediately presents himself before the mercy-seat. (V. 6.) “ *And Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the even-tide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.*” Here, it has been argued, is a case of public social prayer. “Joshua also,” (observes Mr. Pope, p. 35) “with the elders of Jerusalem, joined in an act of supplication to the Lord.” Mr. Moore, (*Inquiry*, p. 33) speaks of it to the same effect. “Joshua,” (he says) “followed the example of his predecessors—the prayer, or rather the substance of it, is given. It was an act of public supplication in which the elders, at least, joined with Joshua.” Now from this we are to infer that this

was a case of *public, joint, or social* prayer, in which *at least* the elders, if not the people joined. Let us turn to the prayer itself, and see how far the assertion is borne out by the fact. "*And JOSHUA SAID,*" (not the elders, but Joshua alone) "*O Lord God! wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us.*"—"O LORD! WHAT SHALL I SAY WHEN ISRAEL TURNETH THEIR BACKS AGAINST THEIR ENEMIES." Here is expressly an *individual* prayer, in which not one word is said as to the elders "*joining,*" in the supplication. "*And the Lord said unto Joshua, get thee up;*" (still Joshua alone, not Joshua and *at least* the elders) "*wherefore liest thou upon thy face?*" The communication, therefore, with the Deity is evidently on the part of Joshua *alone*. The elders may, for ought we know to the contrary, have prayed—of that, however, nothing is said; but enough is said to prove that they did not pray socially with Joshua.

A case, similar in nearly all its circumstances, occurs 1 Chron. xxi. 16. It is on the occasion of the pestilence which followed the numbering the people by David. "*Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.*" Here again, it will be said, is an instance of social prayer, in which *at least* the elders joined with David. Let us hear the prayer, and judge:—"And David said unto God, is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God! be on me and on my father's house, but not on thy people that they should be plagued."

On the occasion of the war waged against the Benjamites, by the other tribes, in consequence of the indignities offered to the concubine of the levite, we find more than one reference to the practice of appearing before the tabernacle for the purpose of consultation. "*And the children of Israel went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord God said, Go up; for to-morrow I will give them into thine hand.*" (Judges, xx. 18, 23, 26, 28. See also Judges, i. 1.) In this case, as in the previous one with Moses, there is no doubt, but that the inquiry was made individually by one person, probably the high priest; this is confirmed by the explanation annexed, (v. 27) "*For the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days; and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son*

"of Aaron, stood before it in those days, saying, Shall I again go out," &c. The people, however, appear before the throne of God to express their feelings on this lamentable occasion. "And the people came to the house of God, and abode there till evening BEFORE GOD, and lift up their voices and wept sore; and said, O Lord God of Israel! why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?" (xxi. 2, 3.) This conduct, both of the priest and of the people, bears an evident relation to the peculiar presence of Jehovah. It was before *the ark*, in which was recorded that covenant which had been made with their fathers, that the priest came to "ask counsel." It was before God—in the house of God—that the people assembled, individually, to express, their feelings and their sorrows. We hear of no "liturgy," no "form of prayer," prepared to suit the occasion; neither was there any extemporaneous prayer of one man, the priest, as the organ, or mouth-piece of the assembly; it being expressly said that they lift up *their voices*, a form of expression irreconcilable with the prayer of one man. This, so far as it was prayer at all, was prayer of the third class, (see this volume p. 269) or *public individual prayer by several, each praying separately, though in the same place.*"

When it is recorded, that the people said "O Lord God of Israel," &c. is it to be supposed that all the people of all the eleven tribes joined in one form of words? Is it not rather intended that this was the *purport* of what they said? It does not appear, indeed, that this was prayer at all, but they probably expressed their feelings in a natural and unstudied manner, each for himself and in his own language; and they did this before the ark, not for the purposes of publicity and sociality—*purposes which could have been equally well answered in any other place, or places*—but because here was the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, "where God shewed himself propitious and appeased by the blood of the sacrifices that was sprinkled before this place." Accordingly we find in the next verse, (4) that "it came to pass on the morrow that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings." Here is evidently no sanction whatever for the kind of worship now advocated by Mr. Moore, and others—for "social prayer in the manner now in use; that is, one individual delivering the prayer in the name of all, and the congregation signifying their participation and concurrence by the response, Amen." (Moore's Inquiry, p. 120.) It may be said, is not this

conduct a precedent for other times and other nations? In reply, we allow that certainly it may be so; that every nation, therefore, placed in the same circumstances as the children of Israel—having the same modes of belief, and the same primitive but confined views of the local presence of Deity; and having, above all, the same authority to appear before that presence—would do well to act in a similar manner; that is, not by socially praying to God, which is not the thing recorded, but, through the medium of their rulers, *consulting* with the Deity as to the course they should pursue in time of difficulty. Such a people, too, may not only act the same part as the children of Israel, in this respect, but they may look for the same result; namely, *an audible and miraculous reply*. When such passages as these are adduced, in the present controversy, is it meant that *we*, the British people, are in a condition *thus* to imitate the example of the Jewish nation?

Similar to the above case, in nearly all its circumstances, (so far, at least, as our subject is concerned) is the conduct of Samuel and the children of Israel (1 Sam. vii.) on occasion of the repentance of the latter of their idolatry and their worship of strange gods. The ark was but newly recovered from the Philistines. Samuel admonishes them that they shall be forgiven and delivered from their enemies on repentance; and he further says—“*Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord.*” They assemble accordingly, and, as our common version has it, “*they drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there—we have sinned against the Lord.*” The Chaldaic paraphrase renders the first clause—“*they poured out their hearts in penitence before the Lord.*” Grotius observes that “*the effusion of water signifies tears.*” In fact, it may be said, as in the former passage, that they “*lift up their voices and wept sore.*” Let us look at their language: “*WE have sinned against the Lord.*” It is evident that this is the language of the people themselves; not of Samuel on their part, for they afterwards request him to pray for them. It will not be said that they joined, on this occasion, in a liturgy or set form of prayer; it only remains therefore to conclude that each spoke for himself the feelings of his own heart; as, when it is said that they fasted, it is meant that each fasted individually, and in his own person. It may be doubted, indeed, whether this expression—“*we have sinned,*” &c. implies prayer at all; whether, indeed, it be not rather an

avowal of their incompetency to pray. From a sense of their sinfulness the people here, as on some other similar occasions, appear to have wanted sufficient confidence to pray for themselves, whilst their impressions of the sanctity of Samuel's character, joined with their belief in the peculiar presence of God in the ark, induce them, when immediate danger approaches, to address the prophet in the most imploring terms: (v. 8) "*Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God FOR US, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.*" It is, as it were, the case of rebels soliciting some favoured courtier to intercede for them with their monarch, and request for them that pardon which, in their own persons, either socially or individually, they dare not ask. Samuel then, we are told, undertakes this office of an intercessor, or mediator; his intercession, which is personal and individual, not jointly or socially with the people, consists of two parts—of sacrifice and of prayer. It is said (v. 9) that "*Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly to the Lord, and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel.*" These are described as the acts—the sole acts of Samuel—for the people indeed; that is, for their benefit and advantage; but not as their act: not jointly and in conjunction with them "*in the manner now in use.*" It is added, that "*the Lord heard him;*" the meaning of this expression probably being that he answered him from the mercy-seat. See a similar case, 1 Sam. viii. 6, 7; also xv. 10, 11. The supplication of the children of Israel in a previous case (Judges, x. 15) though regarded by the defenders of the practice as an instance of social prayer, (see Moore's Inquiry, p. 33) would appear also to be strictly a case of the same description. How truly, as well as beautifully has the whole been described by the Psalmist: (Ps. xcix. 5)—"*Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool, for he is holy. Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them; he spake unto them in the cloudy pillar.*"

In turning to the third point—which has, indeed, been, in a great measure, forestalled by what we have already remarked upon—we have to examine what may more peculiarly be called the *worship* of the Jewish tabernacle. On reference to the passages on this subject, we shall find that this worship consisted in national sacrifices, and other merely ceremonial observances, not in social prayer. The prayer of the tabernacle—for instances of prayer, indi-

vidually performed, are certainly recorded—arose out of what we have already seen, a belief in the actual presence, and the *consulting* Deity upon peculiar matters of trouble or difficulty. Prayer was, thus, a petition presented at the visible throne of God, *not* by the people at large, but by the priest or ruler; and with the expectation of a miraculous reply. But joint prayer, on the part of the people, was evidently not a part of the tabernacle worship. We shall now proceed to shew that it *was* not, and that it *could* not have been so.

With a view of shewing the nature of the tabernacle worship, we turn first to the instructions given by Deity to Moses thereon, where we shall find that worship described, and the conditions of the covenant between God and the children of Israel recorded. "*Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar, two lambs of the first year day by day continually. This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet you to speak there unto thee; and there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by glory.*" (Exod. xxix. 38, 42; see also Exod. xxvii. 1.) Here it will be perceived that no allusion whatever is made to social prayer, as a part of the intended tabernacle worship. The reader may consult the whole context, from the 25th to the 30th chapters, which contains a description, at length, of the several parts of the tabernacle, as well as of its intended objects, and he will find that no *place* is provided for social prayer; that no *persons* are appointed for officiating in it; and that it is not named, or referred to, as one of the objects proposed in its erection.

This is a strong, indeed an unanswerable, part of our argument. In the Jewish tabernacle there was neither room nor place for the social prayer of an assembled multitude. We have preserved to us the fullest description of this erection—its length; its breadth; its contents; its objects. "The length of the tabernacle," (says Lewis, Heb. Antiq. Book II. p. 280) "from end to end was fifteen yards, the breadth was five yards from side to side." In the letter to the Hebrews we have a brief yet full description of its contents: "*For there was a tabernacle made; the first wherein*" (or in the first part of which) "*was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread, which is called the sanctuary; and after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and*

the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat." Such were the contents of the tabernacle. Do we here find any provision—any place for social prayer? By whom—by what persons—could social prayer have been here performed? By the priest, of course; it will be replied, as in the present day. Intending, when we come to an examination of the temple worship, to enter at some length into the objects and employment both of the priests and levites, under the Mosaic law, in order to avoid repetition, we shall not here enter at length into the subject; suffice it that neither the priestly nor the levitical office was instituted for the purpose of social prayer. "*The priest,*" (we are told by Deity, through one of the prophets) "*was chosen out of all the tribes of the children of Israel:*"—for what purpose? To officiate in social prayer? No!—"To offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me." (1 Sam. ii. 28.) The office of the levites was "*to do the service*" (or labour) "*of the tabernacle;*" they were appointed "*to bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof;*" and they were afterwards, by David, "*set over the SERVICE OF SONG in the house of the Lord, after the ark had rest. And they ministered before the dwelling-place of the tabernacle of the congregation with SINGING, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.*" (See Num. i. 50; iii. 6; iv. 1. Deut. x. 8. 1 Ch. vi. 31; ix. 14; xv. 2; xxiii. 3 & 26.)

An endeavour has been made (as we shall hereafter see) to make it appear, that the levites were appointed to conduct social prayer. A most unfounded supposition. The national prayers of the people, if they may be so called, (which were indeed rather petitions to Jehovah, as their ruler, than prayers to him as their God;) these were, in the first instance, presented (but individually not socially) by Moses or by Joshua, and afterwards by the high priest. Music and singing, *not prayer*, formed the employment of the levites, as instituted by David; and even these were confined to the levites; they did not extend, as in the social singing of modern congregations, to the people. But this part of the subject is well worthy of a separate inquiry; we need

* In the case of David (1 Sam. xxiii. 9) we find him putting on "the ephod," supposed to be a linen garment especially appointed to be worn at the time of consulting the Deity before the ark.

only, therefore, sum up our present remarks by saying, that the priests and levites were, in fact, the attendants or courtiers in the presence of the king of Israel, who offered gifts before his throne, and sang praises in his presence; but we in vain look for any body of men, who, like the self-named priests of the present day, presumed to lead the joint prayer of the assembled people.

Though no form of *social* prayer was observed in the tabernacle, yet cases of *individual* prayer occur, to which it will be necessary now to advert; ever bearing in mind, what will be evident from the facts of each case, that prayer before the ark was always connected with, and naturally arose from, the consulting with Deity in the manner already described. The reader, therefore, in the cases we are now going to cite, will bear in mind all that has before been said as to the belief of the Jews in the peculiar presence of Jehovah, as their God and their king.

The prayer of Moses, whether in the mount, or in the tabernacle, (then lately formed, as recorded Exod. xxxii. 31) is much to our present purpose, as shewing that prayer or consultation with Deity took place with one individual, not the whole people. "*And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh! this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written.*" This is clearly an instance of prayer, arising from the peculiar presence of, and connected with the fact of consulting Deity; but it is equally clear that the construction of the prayer, or petition, is individual.

The well-known case of Hannah, afterwards the mother of Samuel, next presents itself. The desire of offspring, increased by the insults of her rival, induced her, when with her husband she had come up to offer sacrifice before the ark, to "*pray unto the Lord and weep sore,*" for "*she was in bitterness of soul,*" (1 Sam. i. 10), "*and she vowed a vow, and it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli*" (the priest, who sat upon a seat in the building) "*marked her mouth; now Hannah she spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.*" Her agitation appears to have been excessive, for Eli "*thought she had been drunken;*" but Hannah answered, "*I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and have poured out my soul before the Lord.*" This was the prayer of the tabernacle; offered in that place, as in the personal presence of God, but offered individually, and not socially and

collectively "*in the manner now in use,*" either by a liturgy, or by means of an extemporaneous form*. Among the many other cases on record, the reader may particularly refer to an instance of prayer in the tabernacle, by David, in 2 Sam. vii. 18, as also in 1 Chron. xvii. 16; the expression is, that "*he went in and sat before the Lord:*" the posture, here called sitting, being at that time considered as one of reverence. The request made in the prayer which, on this occasion, he offered up, is recorded at length, and is full to our present purpose. The prophet Nathan had communicated to the king that it was the will of God that his son Solomon, and not himself, should build a house or temple for the Lord. "*Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord; and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?*" Such is the commencement of this instance of individual prayer before the ark; its conclusion is in the same form and manner: "*Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.*" In the cases now adduced we have a complete view of the worship of the Jewish tabernacle; fully confirming the positions laid down, that, this people considered Jehovah as locally present in the ark; and that they, therefore, consulted with him there in cases of difficulty, and individually offered up their prayers or petitions to him in times of distress or trouble.

Before leaving this part of the subject, there are two or three passages adduced by the defenders of social prayer,

* The object of the extemporaneous and individual petition of Hannah was, as we have said, that she might be blessed with offspring: the church of England, on a not dissimilar occasion, has provided a *set form*, in which social prayer is, of course, introduced. We refer to "The thanksgiving of women after child-birth;" commonly called the "churching of women." The religion of the English, is here evidently *more formal* than that of the Jewish temple. They would seem to differ, too, in another particular. It does not appear that Eli levied contributions upon Hannah before he would allow her to pray; whereas it is especially provided in the English rubric, that "the woman that cometh to give her thanks must offer *accustomed offerings*;" that is, must pay for the prayer of the priest in *hard cash*! But the prayer on these and other occasions, are, we are told, not the individual prayer of the priest, but the joint prayers of the whole congregation. Why then, we ask, does not the benefit go with the burden? and why do not the people share in the money which is paid for their joint prayers? Why should both the priest and the people pray, and the priest only be paid for praying? Is not this, to use an Irish expression, having "the reciprocity all on one side?" We really doubt if the people are fairly done by in these matters, and would recommend them to look to it.

to which we must briefly advert. They have not fallen under either of the heads of our inquiry, yet should not be left wholly unnoticed. Mr. Pope (p. 35) recapitulates a number of cases of what he considers public devotion, supplication, &c. during the period of time we are now inquiring about. Mr. Moore (p. 32) follows him closely by a recapitulation of nearly the same passages. The reader, aided by the remarks we have already made, may, with advantage, consult these writers; and will, we think, perceive the many fallacies which we have discovered in their works upon this subject. After the patriarchal ages, "when the *"children of Israel"* (observes Mr. Moore) "*had become a numerous people, many instances occur in the Old Testament which prove that the worship of God in large assemblies was a practice to which they were accustomed.*" The reader will here call to mind that it is not worship generally, but social prayer—that is, prayer "*in large assemblies,*" offered by one individual as the act of such assemblies, which is here in question. The two first cases which Mr. Moore adduces are from Exodus xv. and Deut. xxxii. Unfortunately for his hypothesis it, however, happens that *these are both of them individual and neither of them prayer.* Mr. Moore supplies his own refutation. The "*prayer here recorded*" (Exodus xv.) is (he allows) "*called a song.*" The fact is, that it is a song, and not a prayer; a song celebrating the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt; as that in Deut. xxxii. describes, in a poetical, or rather an oratorical form, the various dispensations of God towards his chosen people. Mr. Moore speaks of the latter as "*a solemn act of worship, which Moses conducted.*" Meaning, we conclude, to compare it to the mode of social prayer now in use, where the priest or minister, in our churches or chapels, is described as *conducting* the devotions of the congregation, and hence, by implication, justifying their practice. The very passage which he himself immediately quotes, will sufficiently confute this construction. For it is said, "*And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun.*"*

* That these compositions were not *social*, in the sense in which the word is applied to prayer, is evident from their grammatical construction. The one, though "*sung by Moses and the children of Israel,*" begins thus—"*I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.*" The second commences thus—"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." To speak of these as instances of social prayer, "*conducted by Moses,*" is as rational, and as fair in argument, as to adduce, for the same purpose, the speech of Paul before Tertullus, or that

The fact is, as will be seen by a reference to the preceding chapter (xxxi. 28) that this song, or address, could not have been socially joined in by the people; it was in fact directed against the people. "*Gather unto me*" (said Moses to the levites) "*all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth TO RECORD AGAINST THEM. For I know, that after my death, ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.*" In the way of denunciation, therefore, not of prayer, we are told that "Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended." It is aptly described, in the heading of the chapter, as "*Moses' song, which setteth forth God's mercy and vengeance.*" Yet this is adduced as an instance of social worship; as though not Moses, but the whole people had *spoken these words*, and had *called heaven and earth to record against themselves!* "This," says Mr. Moore, "*was at least public, if not social.*" Certainly it was public. Was it likely that Moses would have borne record against the people, in order to guard them against future evil, *except in public?* Was this a thing to be done in private? But what has this to do with public social prayer?

A yet more striking instance of the same species of misrepresentation immediately occurs. "*Samuel prayed to the Lord in the presence of the people.*" Pope, p. 35.

"1 Sam. xii. 16, &c. we are informed that Samuel prayed, *evidently in the presence of the people.*" Moore, p. 34.*

The inference clearly intended to be here drawn is in favour of public, of social prayer; that is, it is meant that Samuel also *conducted* the worship of the people. But what is really the fact of the case? The prophet has been reminding them of the various bounties of God towards them, reproaching them with their past ingratitude, and exhorting

of Stephen addressed to his persecutors. The national songs of the Jewish people, mostly bearing reference to the *kingship* of Jehovah, we shall hereafter separately examine.

* An evident stress is here laid upon the fact that this prayer was *in the presence* of the people; as though, by a kind of play upon words, it must therefore, be prayer in which they joined, or participated. It is evident that the prayer of Hannah was *in the presence* of Eli; yet will it be contended that the prayer of Hannah was the prayer of Eli? The publican and the pharisee are described as praying each *in the presence* of the other; yet will it be contended that theirs was joint or social prayer?

them to future obedience. "Now therefore" (he adds, v. 16) "stand, and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great in the sight of the Lord." We are then told of the prayer in question, "So Samuel called upon the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day." The intended effect is produced, for "all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. And all the people" (acting apparently under the impression before adverted to, see p. 338, that of a depressing sense of their own sinfulness and unfitness themselves to address God in prayer) "said unto Samuel, pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not."

The prayer, if it may be so called, of the prophet, was evidently an audible appeal to heaven that his warnings to the people might be aided and confirmed by a miraculous interposition. This was indeed *evidently in the presence of the people*—it would have been of little service in their absence. How far it was a prayer in which they joined, or could have joined—a social prayer—the reader has only to imagine himself in their situation in order to determine.*

* It may perhaps be regarded as one among the faults of the book of Common Prayer—which can be remedied in "*the Reformed Liturgy*," for the use of the Unitarians—that the former does not contain any instances of public and social prayer, according to Mr. Moore's plan, by which the people are represented as joining in denunciations and praying for judgments against themselves!—We are indeed by law provided with a prayer for rain in time of draught; and one for fair weather, when threatened with "a plague of rain and waters;" but when the whole shall have been reformed upon the above principle, may we not expect to find a prayer for thunder and lightning; and a humble supplication, on the part of the people, for rain during hay-making, or a hurricane at harvest time? Dr. Slop (the Dr. Slop of Laurence Sterne we mean) would have been a famous hand in drawing up a *Reformed Liturgy* on this plan. Mr. Moore's version of Deut xxxii. in which "the song of God's vengeance" is transferred from Moses to the people, who are thus made by wholesale to utter denunciations against themselves, reminds us of the Welch parson, who had, as directed, on one of the days in Lent, to read what is termed the "*Comminution*," being curses against certain crimes selected from this same book of Deuteronomy. As the dinner hour was speedily approaching, he is said to have turned over the leaf, and thus addressed the people—"Dearly beloved, on looking further, I perceive that there are many curses yet to come; but as time waxes short, I will sum them all up in one brief and expressive curse—The curse of God alight upon ye all." "Amen," replied the solemn clerk, and the pious congregation. We confess we thought this a fable, till it was out-Heroded by Mr. Moore's making the children of Israel join in Moses' song of vengeance, and Samuel's prayer for thunder and rain, on the day of wheat harvest!

The passages Joshua vii. 6, and Judges x. 15, we have already adverted to. The case of David, 1 Ch. xxix. 10, cited also by both Mr. Pope and Mr. Moore, (p. 34) is a case of *individual*, not of *social* prayer; but this passage having, apparently from one of the expressions of David, been deemed and quoted as an instance of joint prayer on the part of the king and the people, it becomes necessary to give it a more particular examination. The expression referred to is that in verse 13, "*Now therefore our God we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.*" This, it may be observed, can in no way be considered as prayer or petition; for, even if taken literally, it is thanksgiving; but, inasmuch as David *afterwards*, on this occasion, prays, advantage has been taken of the plural form in this verse, to make it appear that his prayer, (*although expressly delivered in the first person, singular*) was also joint or social. Thus, Mr. Moore speaks of it as "*an admirable prayer, consisting of thanksgiving and supplication, delivered in the presence of the people.*" adding, "*this then, it appears, from the plural form of expression, was strictly a social prayer, consisting of adoration, thanksgiving, and petition, delivered by David in the name of the people, and in which the people evidently joined.*" Now the form of the prayer being, as we shall presently see, *strictly individual*, the only ground for these assertions is the occurrence of the plural form of expression in the 13th verse "*Now Lord our God we thank thee,*" &c. But a careful attention to the context will shew that the *thanks* and *praise*, here spoken of, referred to the *actions* of the people, to which David was here adverting, and not to any form of *words*, whether of prayer, thanksgiving, or otherwise. Let us look at the circumstances of the case. David, from the public property, as well as from his own private funds, ("*his own proper good,*" v. 3) had liberally contributed to the building of the future *palace* of God. Having set this example, he then called upon the people to do likewise; "*Who then*" (he says, v. 5) "*is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?*" "Then" (in consequence of this invitation) "*the chief of the fathers, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, &c. offered willingly, and gave, for the service of the house of God, five thousand talents,*" &c. "Then" (it is added) "*the people rejoiced, for that*" (because) "*they offered willingly;*" that is, on account of the largeness and liberality of the collection made. "And David, the king, also, rejoiced with great joy: wherefore" (for which reason) "*David blessed the Lord before all the congregation.*" We

have now come to the thanksgiving of David, which is, however, spoken of, as strictly individual; *before* the people indeed, but not jointly *with* the people. The tenor of his language; from verse 11 to 13 inclusive, is worthy of remark: it bears reference wholly to the *offerings* of the people. He first refers all their means of giving them to God. "*Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all.*" He adds, afterwards, (v. 16) "*O Lord, our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.*" What then is the meaning of the 13th verse—"Now, therefore, our God we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name?" Evidently that by their *actions*; by the rich *gifts* which they were devoting to the service of the Lord; by the devotion which they were thus shewing to his will, and the ardour which they displayed for his worship—that by *these* means they were thanking and praising the glorious name of God; a construction which is supported by the ensuing verse: "*But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.*" That this is the correct meaning of the passage is probable for three reasons. First, That such an interpretation is, by analogy, strictly conformable to the spirit of scripture language on other similar occasions.* Secondly, That the language of David throughout, if this passage be thus rendered, is

* In all languages things and actions are, transitively, put for their effects or consequences; thus any thing which *shews* respect is, in common language, called respect. This is particularly the case in a primitive and figurative language, like the Hebrew; hence the gifts of the people are here called their thanks, (that is, their mode of giving thanks) and their praise (that is, their mode of offering praise.) Thus the Jews had their *thank-offerings*; that is, the offerings by means of which they gave thanks, see Lev. vii. 12; xxii. 29, 2 Chron. xxix. 31, xxxiii. 16, Amos iv. 5, v. 22. So, with regard to praise, it is said, "*the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord,*" Ps. lxxxix. 5; that is, not praise by means of language, but of their beauty, &c. see also Ps. cxl. 10. In one passage (Ps. xix. 1) the day and the night are actually described as "*uttering speech*" in praise of the glory of God. In the same spirit the Hebrew word for a *present*, signifies, also, a *blessing*, because supposed to bring with it a blessing. "*Take, I pray thee, my blessing* (my present) *that is brought unto thee,*" is the language of Jacob to Esau. For a similar use of the word blessing, see Judges i. 15, 1 Sam. xxv. 27, xxx. 26, 2 Kings v. 15. See also 2 Cor. ix. 5, in which latter case the gifts or contributions of the Corinthian church, are spoken of as *causing* thanksgiving. A careful reference to the above passages and others of a similar kind, will completely justify the interpretation which we have given in the text of the thanks and praises of the Jewish people.

strictly individual, and in the singular number; occasionally, indeed, using the pronouns, *I* and *we*, as a man necessarily does when speaking in his own person, but adverting to the past actions of others jointly with himself. Thirdly, This (in the 13th verse) could not have been intended as a verbal thanksgiving of the people, because the reflections arising out of these splendid donations, for so important a purpose, having, *first*, (v. 10) burst forth in the language of praise from the lips of David; he *afterwards* (v. 20) calls upon the people to do the same. "*And David said to all the congregation NOW bless the Lord. And all the congregation bowed down and blessed the Lord God,*" &c.; that is, every man *NOW*—and not before—individually, did that, of which David *BEFORE*, had, also individually, set them the example.

This then, so far as we have yet seen it, was an instance of thanksgiving; emphatically so, by actions as well as words; public, of course, for the occasion of it, was a public contribution for a national object; but, in point of language, individual; and in no other sense of the words joint or social than as the same epithets might be applied to the proceedings of any public meeting assembled for some one, common object, either as a deliberative, or political assembly in our own country; at, for instance, what is commonly called amongst us—"a public meeting."

The thanksgiving of David, however—delivered, as it probably was, before the tabernacle, and in the presence of God—assumed, towards the end, the language of *prayer*. This, it *may* be said—this, it *has* been said, was joint—was social prayer. Mr. Moore, as we have seen, calls it (p. 34) "*an admirable prayer, delivered in the presence of the people.*" Nay more. "*This,*" (he says) "*it appears from the plural form of the expression, was strictly a SOCIAL PRAYER, consisting of adoration, thanksgiving, and petition, delivered by David in the name of the people, and in which the people evidently joined.*" The language of David, let it be observed, does not assume the form of prayer at all, till at the 18th verse: let us see if it be then the language of social prayer. "*O Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart OF THY PEOPLE,*" (not of our hearts, as one praying socially would have said) "*and prepare THEIR heart unto thee.*" The prayer—the social prayer, so called, proceeds: "*And give unto Solomon, MY SON, a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, &c. and to build a palace, for the which I HAVE MADE PROVISION.*" Is

this the plural form of expression of which Mr. Moore speaks? Did the people *evidently* join in this prayer? Did they, each and all, socially pray for "*MY son Solomon.*" We ought to be serious in these matters; but with such criticism before us, it is really no easy task. Mr. Moore must surely have thought his readers no Solomons, to be carried away by such assertions and such arguments. David afterwards, as we have seen, calls on the people to follow the example he had individually set them, by blessing the Lord; a call which they obey "*and bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord;*"* that is, shewed external marks of respect and reverence. Sacrifices, then follow, and the people "*did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness.*" In all the various modes of shewing respect and reverence, recorded in this passage, there is then, we find, no trace whatever of public social prayer, in the manner now in use.

The last passage, relative to this period, quoted by the two writers above-named, is one from the 16th chap. of 1 Chron. v. 4. "*And David appointed certain levites, of whom Asaph was the chief, to minister before the ark of the Lord, and TO RECORD, AND THANK, AND PRAISE the Lord.*" The office and duties of the levites we shall not now stop to inquire into. They will hereafter be more particularly discussed. We will simply take this passage as it stands, only premising that there is a marked and evident distinction between thanksgiving, or praise; and petition, or prayer. The duties of the levites (bearing reference, as we have seen, to the peculiar presence of Jehovah, as king of Israel) were, in his royal tent, or presence, "*to record, and thank, and praise the Lord.*" Of prayer, as a part of these duties, let it be observed that not one single word is said; yet what is Mr. Moore's comment upon the passage? In this chapter we are informed, he says, "*that David appointed certain officers, whose stated employment it was to offer to God devout addresses, of praise and thanksgiving; and this, it*

* Our common version says "*they worshipped the Lord AND THE KING:*" a friend, for whose critical acuteness we have great respect, suggests that the words, "*and the King*" belong to the next verse. It would then read "*and they bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord. And the King, and they*" (the people) "*sacrificed,*" &c. In a previous sheet we have adverted to the phrase, "*they worshipped God AND THE KING,*" in explanation of the term worship, as shewing that it does not necessarily mean prayer, but *any* external mode of shewing respect or reverence; that sense of the word may equally be maintained, even though the suggestion of our friend should prove as well founded, as it is certainly ingenious.

" is added, they did continually ; and of what consequence
 " is it whether they were chaunted, or sung, or spoken, or
 " that they were accompanied by musical instruments ?
 " *They were social acts of praise and PRAYER !*" (p. 35.)

Now why, let us ask, in the name of common honesty and fair argument—why is the word *prayer* here introduced, when it has no sanction whatever from that passage of scripture which the remark professes to illustrate ? The acts of the levites were *not* " acts of praise and PRAYER." The consulting Deity in prayer belonged, as we have seen, to the priest ; the appointment of the levites expressly was " to record, and *thank, and praise the Lord.*" Of the writer of " The Inquiry into the Scriptural authority for Social Worship," as he is personally unknown to us, we cannot be suspected of a wish to speak personally disrespectful ; but this we may be allowed to say, how weak must *that cause* be which requires for its support such quotations as we have been adverting to, and such comments as we have above exposed ; which renders it necessary that its advocate should transform an individual denunciation of vengeance into a social supplication ; and foist in a word—*prayer*—the very word too on which the whole controversy hinges—as existing in a passage where it does not occur !

Reviewing what we have written in this Essay, we think we may be justified in stating that we have proved and established these conclusions—namely, that the prayer of the tabernacle, although in a certain sense public, was not designedly so ; publicity having been here, in fact, what logicians call accidental, not essential ; the real object being not to pray in public, but to pray in the appointed place of prayer ; not to pray in the presence of man, but in the presence of God, who was supposed to be there specially present. Neither was such prayer, in any sense of the words, *joint or social*. It was not the collective prayer of many, but the individual prayer of one person ; or, if of many, each praying by himself, individually. It was not prayer by means of a liturgy, or a pre-composed form, in which all wholly or occasionally joined, as is performed in the established churches of Rome and England ; and to introduce which amongst the Unitarians has been the professed, and it would appear the successful, object of the publication of the " Reformed Liturgy : " neither was it what is called joint extemporaneous prayer, or the language of one appointed spokesman in the name and on the part of a whole assembly, as is practised amongst other dissenters of our own age and

*country. To sum up all in a few words—it was NOT “social prayer in the manner now in use; that is, of one individual delivering the prayer in the name of all, and the congregation signifying their participation and concurrence by the response, Amen;” but it was either the prayer of the priest, or servant of God, who went from the presence of the people, and in the holy place offered up his petitions in the hope and expectation of a miraculous reply, or, if the people prayed in or near this tabernacle, it was the separate, unstudied and unaided prayer of individuals who spoke in their own names and persons, with neither priest to lead their devotions, nor congregation to join in them, nor clerk to conclude with the response, Amen; who prayed before their tabernacle not for the purpose of publicity, but on account of its being supposed the peculiar residence or palace of their God and king; and who therefore, in this respect, can be no pattern for the imitation of any other people, still less of modern times, possessing, as we do, more correct and more enlightened views of the nature and attributes of God—the hour having long since arrived when God is neither to be worshipped “in this mountain nor in that city,” (from a belief in his peculiar presence) “but when they that worship the Father shall worship him in spirit and in truth, for he seeketh such to worship him.”

Thus far, then, we have established so much of our position (see p. 15) as maintains, that social prayer was not *instituted by Moses*; and that it was not afterwards, by divine direction, introduced into the tabernacle worship. The worship of the Jewish temple yet remains for examination in a future Essay. Much of the materials which have been used as to the tabernacle, will be found equally applicable to the temple service; and the whole inquiry into the duties of the priests, levites, &c., and the question, whether or not they officiated, like the self-named priests of the present day, in public social prayer—nearly the whole of this part of the subject has been, in order to avoid tautology, purposely deferred till we proceed to an examination of the temple service.

In conclusion, for the present, we would again wish to impress upon our readers that even had the practice of social prayer prevailed in the Jewish tabernacle, it would have been by no means therefore binding upon Christians in the present day; but that not having been the practice of an age to which the forms and ceremonies of religion were peculiarly applicable—and not having formed a part

of a system of religious ordinances, which were of divine appointment and origin—the inference is a fair one, that the ceremony of public social prayer is one without authority from heaven; whilst should it, in the course of our future inquiries, appear equally without a sanction from the writings of the New Testament, as we have already seen it, unsupported by at least a portion of those of the Old, it will then follow that it is a practice not binding upon Christians; and its pernicious consequences and inconsistency with the pure and mental principles laid down by Jesus and his apostles, may be successfully employed to shew it deserving of the reprobation, rather than the approval of every serious and piously disposed mind.

RELIGIOUS CHARACTER—

ITS DISCIPLINE AND IMPROVEMENT.

The following extract from a Private Letter, communicated by one of our Members, is submitted, under the hope that it may prove beneficial to many connected with us in Christian fellowship; to the general reader, also, it will tend to exhibit that faithful and sincere friendship which is to be found only in the church of God, and by means of which the grand end and object of our religious principles—which is to improve and perfect our dispositions and character here, that we may be fitted for happiness hereafter—is furthered and promoted.

—“ And now, my dear Friend, having as before remarked, exhibited my view of your character in all its various forms, I proceed with pleasure to comply with the second part of your request, viz. that I should give you such advice as my experience may dictate, as to the best means of overcoming dispositions and defects which you now see and deplore, and of obtaining those truly devout and religious feelings and dispositions which will enable you to attain that character which Christianity demands, and without which you are satisfied you never can obtain that excellence you are professing to aim at and press after—the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

A A

“ Being a man of like passions and infirmities with yourself—having had most adverse constitutional dispositions to strive against—and having, like you, been exposed to the dangers of worldly applause and prosperity, I cannot, perhaps, take a more effectual way of complying with your wishes than by giving you, simply and unadorned, those suggestions which my own experience affords, from the conflicts and difficulties I have had to encounter ; together with a description of those means which I have found, in my own case, most successful in gaining the objects which you also now have in view. In contemplating the causes which have led you thus anxiously to seek to know your own character, and the best means of making it perfect, I cannot but perceive the finger of a gracious and unerring Providence, and confess the wisdom and certainty with which all his plans have been ordained and accomplished. A striking event in my own life—the death of my wife—was the epoch of my conversion ; as I trust the errors into which ——— has fallen, may prove the occasion of your mental improvement. It seemed necessary, in the great chain of events, that there should be such a man as ———, and that he should so err to the extent he has done, both for his own benefit and yours ; and at the same time, that there should be so faithful a friend, to avail himself of the circumstances, as ———, in order to bring both to deep reflection ; not to say such a one as myself to have been persevering for years in treasuring up all the accumulated materials, in aid of other circumstances, to make your change complete and unalterable. Can we, I again repeat, do otherwise than perceive the finger of an unerring Providence, who, notwithstanding the waywardness of his erring creatures, will accomplish his purposes, and fulfil all his benevolent designs ? And is it possible we can contemplate this without being humbled to the dust with a deep sense of our own littleness and unworthiness ; and with hearts bursting with gratitude, henceforth determine that it shall be *“ our meat and our drink to do his holy will ”*—*“ that we will present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service ; ”* and that, being no longer conformed to this world, *“ but transformed by the renewing of our minds, we may prove in reality what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”* And here let me observe how wise, how equitable are all the ways of God ! As it regards myself, I had no friend whatever to direct or guide me in the narrow way that leadeth to eternal life ; but I had, as a powerful

incentive to action, the recollection of past transgression, and the great mercy of my God in forgiving them, and snatching me as it were a brand from the burning. I had, on my part, to encounter great difficulties as my school-master. Your early life was, generally speaking, especially as compared to mine, moral;—you have experienced but few difficulties, but you have had, as a substitute for such trials, what, if duly estimated, is invaluable—a faithful and watchful friend. How just, how even, how kind are all the ways of heaven! Being at too great a distance from you—and having a large family, which it is my sacred duty to bring up in the ways of religion and virtue—I cannot perform that part of a faithful friend which, under other circumstances, I have done—and would, if in my power, continue to do with pleasure. I would therefore advise you to secure to yourself some fearless and faithful friend, on whom you can at all times rely, to watch over you—and faithfully tell you, even where he merely suspects your conduct to be improper, or your motives not correct. Enable him to do this by frequently questioning him as to his opinion of your character; encourage every act of faithfulness by strong and unequivocal marks of your approbation and gratitude; open to him your whole heart, with every secret movement of your mind; and on every point of character in which you differ, doubt your own judgment till you have deeply examined your own heart; if, after this examination, you should still think him mistaken, attempt, with modest diffidence, to shew him his mistake; and, even should he ultimately prove in error, let him feel that you are equally obliged, as though he had been ever so correct.

“Aided by the grand auxiliary just mentioned, I would next advise that you seek to obtain that which is indeed more valuable than that invaluable treasure, a faithful friend—I mean “THE ROOT WITHIN YOURSELF;” in other words, *principle*, not derived from, or sustained by others, *but rooted within* the mind. Knowing, as you now do, what your constitutional dispositions are—till you get this all powerful preservative, watch them closely, suspect yourself in every thing. Every morning reflect, deeply reflect, on all the situations and circumstances in which it is likely that you may be placed in the course of the day; look at the temptations and difficulties which they will present to a disposition like yours, and make up your mind to the line of conduct you ought to pursue: after this scrutiny, offer up your prayers to your heavenly Father for guidance and support. This

will put you in a state of mind to withstand the world, its allurements, and its buffetings. Humbled under a sense of your own littleness, you will feel disposed to exclaim, in the language of the Poet,

“ Teach my best reason, reason ; my best will,
Teach rectitude ; and fix my firm resolve,
Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrear.”

“ Again in the evening, after the turmoils of the day, and in the retirement of your closet, take a close and impartial review of all the occurrences of the day ; not only examine your actions, but the motives which produced those actions, and pass a righteous judgment ; thus you will be enabled to detect every improper action and motive, and correct them in the commencement, before other circumstances obliterate them, or they become habitual : by these means you may, at length, obtain, in the language of the Poet above referred to,

“ A mind in arms—
A military discipline of thought,
To foil temptation in the doubtful field ;—
An ever watchful ardour for the right :
’Tis *these* first give, then guard, a cheerful heart.
Nought that is *right*, think little ; well aware
What reason bids, God bids—by His command
How aggrandized the smallest thing we do !”

“ As a further means to enable you to overcome dispositions and habits of long standing, I would advise, that in your first endeavours you go in some measure to the opposite extreme, as old habits will supply a sufficient force to bring you to the proper level. What I have recommended is, I am aware, difficult ; and, should you feel discouraged and disheartened by its difficulty, let me offer you the following remarks, as well worthy your deepest consideration :—Are you willing, rather than encounter these difficulties, to give up the glorious hope of an exalted situation in a future life ? Are you willing, at the great day of account, to be tried by a lower standard than that which the Gospel prescribes, and which you have pointed out to others ? If you are so, then well might I ask, where is pride ? where ambition ? or rather, where is that noble ardour which we so much admire, for example, in the Apostle Paul ? *He* had not already attained, neither was he already perfect, but he was constantly striving to become so ; and he counted all things but loss, and dross, and dung, for the excellency of *that* knowledge—which you possess ; and he deemed no sacrifice or difficulty too great, if *by any means* he might attain *that* resurrection—to which

you also aspire. Surely, my friend, your conscience would indeed reproach you could you set light on such exalted honours and serious expectations as those to which you have been called by the Most High; especially when it is considered that you have not been called upon to suffer as the Apostle did, or to receive the blessings of the Gospel accompanied, as in his case, by persecution; but that, amidst every earthly blessing, you are merely required to encounter some difficulties in combating and overcoming dispositions which you see and acknowledge to be wrong, and unworthy of the Christian. Can you think these conditions too severe? surely not! On the contrary, I do hope—I am assured, that you will manfully exert yourself to overcome every difficulty; and that you will never sacrifice your glorious expectations merely because you have constitutional defects—because you find it difficult to give up your love of ease, your reserve, your pride, your independence, falsely so called;—for, I ask, can the existence of these things be compatible with what ought to be the feelings and character of one “*who is not his own, but is bought with a price;*” who has had antecedent blessings showered down upon him as inducements to holy obedience to the will of God—who has been adopted (OH! MOST EXALTED HONOUR!) into the family of God, and put in possession of principles and privileges which have been withheld from almost all the world beside—who, in short, is called, by the gracious and especial providence of God, to glory, to virtue, and eternal happiness? Surely, my friend, could you hesitate for a moment, you must be under the strongest infatuation that ever affected the mind of man. Probably you may object that you have constitutional defects, which unfit you for such high honours and expectations. Would you then relinquish them—or would you meanly wish, and *vainly* wish, to obtain the benefits without using the means, or acquiring the necessary qualifications? That you may not be discouraged in the pursuit, let me ask, Had not the Apostle to whom I have already alluded—had not Paul *his* constitutional difficulties; have we not all of us our peculiar constitutional failings and difficulties; and is it not one of the chief objects of Christianity to correct, to regulate, or to conquer such? For myself, you will admit, I am sure, that my constitutional defects were much more difficult than yours; in addition to which I had, by the force of habit, become, in early life, the slave to vice and every degrading passion—an infatuated lover of self-gratification—proud, conceited, resentful, im-

patient of injuries, vindictive, kindling at the shadow of a wrong, irritable to a degree of madness, ignorant, to every good work reprobate, and without God and without hope in the world. These dispositions had, as it were, become a part of my nature. Such were the difficulties I had to encounter; and that, too, without one friend or counsellor to assist or direct me in the almost herculean labour. Was my task then, let me ask, less difficult than yours? yet "*by the favour of God I am what I am.*" Those constitutional dispositions which, previously to my being blessed with the knowledge of Christianity, led to this degraded state, are not at this time destroyed; but they are, I trust, subdued and corrected, and directed into proper channels, by my own constant and vigilant exertions, aided by the principles and motives of the Gospel, the grand and leading object of which is to regulate and controul all our constitutional dispositions, and bring them into complete subjection to the will of God. The means, then, by which I have been able to master these dispositions, may be well worthy of your consideration; and, as far as they may be applicable to your case, of your adoption also. I will proceed, therefore, with plainness, but with sincerity and with affection, to lay at least a portion of them before you in the remainder of this letter.

"Knowing, as I do, that I am constitutionally proud, and liable to be lifted up by circumstances—fully conscious of this defect, every new situation in which I am likely to be placed, furnishes me with a strong and powerful motive to look closely at all the temptations which the situation in question is likely to present to a disposition such as mine: thus am I prepared and guarded against the danger; and when actually placed in the trying circumstances which I had foreseen, I further suspect, and closely watch every movement of my mind; and, if I find any latent feeling of pride arising, I turn to my never-failing remedy—*retrospection*, or a review of the *past*, a habit in which I frequently indulge, having experienced from it the most salutary effects. I call up, in review, the history of my past life—and exaggerate (if possible) all the errors I have been guilty of, and the consequences they must have inevitably led to, but for the mercy and goodness of God in humbling me by affliction; blessing me with the light of the Gospel; and pardoning, *graciously* pardoning, my past transgressions. To strengthen the effect, I particularly call to my mind *one* circumstance, which happened many years back, but which

time can never obliterate from my memory. This circumstance resulted from pride, from self-deception, from a mistaken view of my own attainments in religion. Feeling, by comparison with those around me, that I was superior to many others in talent and character, and being unmindful of the admonition of Paul, "*Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,*" I persuaded myself that no temptation could be sufficiently powerful to call into action any of my former dispositions, so as to expose me to danger. Thus unguarded, I placed myself in circumstances in which I had never *been* placed since I became religious, and found myself exposed to a temptation from which I had great difficulty in escaping; by the blessing of God, however, by reflecting on what is recorded of the temptation of Jesus, and by powerful exertion, I was enabled to rise superior to the threatened danger;—learning, however, by the danger I so narrowly escaped, how capable the mind is of deceiving itself, and of being led astray, unless we are constantly and incessantly on our guard. This circumstance, with every other error and failing of my past life, I frequently accumulate and call up before my mind; and after having taken such a survey, though I were elevated to a throne, pride could have no power over my mind. I necessarily feel humbled in the dust, and disposed to exclaim with the Psalmist, "*Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him.*"

"To advert to another point of character:—though sometimes possessing the highest flow of spirits, I have been, at other times, constitutionally disposed to fits of melancholy and despondency—a constitutional defect which I have found most difficult to conquer. Aware, however, of this aptitude, whenever I perceived its approach, I set myself to combat it with all my might; forcibly, as it were, divesting my mind of all extraneous matter, and of every other employment of the imagination, I take a broad and full survey of things, particularly of the Divine government, and thus bring my mind from a state of despondency into one of resignation and gratitude to God, and inspire in my bosom feelings of pleasure and of cheerfulness.

"The mention here of gratitude to God, reminds me of another point. Judging not only from myself, but from what I see too common in others, I conclude that gratitude for favours received, whether from God or man, is one of the most evanescent feelings of the human mind—whilst it is only in proportion as we can make it a permanent and ever

active principle of our mind, that we prove ourselves worthy of those favours. I find it advisable and necessary, therefore, to use every means in my power to keep this feeling alive and active in my own breast. The enlightened principles which we profess, and the views which we have taken of Christianity, are, I am well aware, when rightly appreciated and fully felt, capable of becoming almost omnipotent in their influence on the human character; yet divested as they are of all external forms, and unaccompanied by the false checks and the unfounded hopes and fears which superstition presents to its votaries, they are of so refined a nature as almost to elude the mind's grasp. Surrounded also as we are by objects and circumstances which are tangible to, and lay such fast hold on our senses—an invisible Being, and future and distant hopes, must maintain an unequal advantage in the competition for our affection and regard. Persuaded of this, I have felt the absolute necessity of throwing into the opposite scale the most powerful auxiliaries, in order to turn the balance, and to revive and confirm those grateful, pious, and devout feelings, so essentially necessary to the character of the Christian, and which alone can enable him to resist the temptations, and encounter the difficulties to which he may be exposed, or to perform with cheerfulness the duties to which he may be called. To call up in my mind, therefore, every grateful feeling to my heavenly Father, I make it a practice to take a *retrospective* view of what I originally was—of my circumstances—my expectations and prospects—of what I might, and probably should have been, but for the kind, unmerited, and providential care of the Most High! I trace back every step of my life, and mark in how many instances he has brought about my good—even in opposition to my own views and wishes—in cases where, had my own plans proved successful, they would only have led to my injury, and probably my ruin. All that I am, have, or enjoy, I can trace to *His* bounty, and feel that I am but a creature of his providence; a thought which enhances every blessing, and sweetens every enjoyment. I call before me every circumstance that has contributed to make my existence a blessing—whether in the world, in my family, or in the church of God; and with all these accumulated and combined, I find my judgment convinced, and my heart filled with gratitude; knowing that to him, my gracious and all bountiful Benefactor, I owe every thing. As a natural consequence, I feel towards him all that filial love and reverence

which (to say the least) I should feel for a father or a friend, who had disinterestedly watched over me for my good, and with benevolent regard directed my every step. By thus reflecting on the past, and by a frequent repetition of this exercise of the mind, I find that, like other habits, this practice becomes almost involuntary; and that when I think of the Deity, it necessarily revives and connects this chain of association. To render these impressions the stronger, I think it necessary and proper *frequently* to recur to the same practice of RETROSPECTION, and by every means in my power to confirm and strengthen the disposition of mind thus obtained. Thus it is, my beloved friend, that we may acquire a high and indelible sense of gratitude to the Supreme Being, and thereby obtain one of the most powerful motives to assist us in the perfecting of our character.

“ Even with all these aids and advantages we cannot, affected as we are by bodily health and surrounding circumstances, but be sensible what fluctuating creatures we are; and that impressions the most powerful at one time, are extremely feeble at another: it becomes therefore necessary, when this occurs, closely and honestly to investigate the cause of this difference; and to call in every aid that can promote a consistency and permanency of character, and of religious feeling;—to this end I have found the advantage of frequently turning my mind to a deep contemplation of the attributes, the works, the revelation, and the government of God; and by this means have made Him almost evident and tangible to my senses. I perceive a Being, who cannot be affected by our vices or our virtues—powerful, wise, and good beyond all our conception or imagination—perfectly independent of, yet employing all His wisdom, power and goodness to bring about and perfect the happiness of innumerable myriads of beings whom he has created. I contrast this great Being with myself, and I sink into insignificance—feeling that I am nothing, yea, less than nothing in the comparison, and am humbled to the dust with the consideration;—but, again, I reflect that, nothing as I am, and every thing as he is, I am the object of his bounty, of his care, and loving kindness—that he has called me with a holy calling—has blest me with a knowledge of his will, of his righteous government—has favoured me with principles the most powerful and the most glorious—that I am honoured and raised to dignity by being adopted into his family, and made an instrument to co-operate, as it were, with him in his unbounded work of benevolence.

I feel then my *real* dignity—a dignity the gift of his bounty and become actuated by a strong and ardent desire that every thought, word, and action of my life may correspond with my high and distinguished calling, and (should I prove unfaithful) to my future glorious destiny. Thus reflecting, I feel my strength renewed, my heart gladdened with feelings of love and gratitude, accompanied by a deep sense of humility: conscious of my own weakness, I exclaim, in the language of Jesus—“*I thank thee, gracious Father, that, whilst thou hast hid these things from the wise and learned, thou hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight.*” Thus occupied, my mind seems divested of all sense of surrounding objects and worldly circumstances. I see and feel but two beings in existence—God and myself; and impressed with the idea that great as he is, and insignificant as I am, that I am yet the object of his care—of his regard—of his distinguished favour, my mind becomes strengthened; and I feel, most powerfully, how holy, how pure, how free from every selfish consideration, one so highly favoured ought to be; and that the approbation of that Being with whom, and in whose presence I seem to stand alone, ought to be the only object of my pursuit or concern.

“Thus seeing God as every thing, and in every thing, and his ways all good and perfect, my love and reverence are excited, strengthened, and confirmed—and I am enabled to go on in my way rejoicing with renovated vigour and determination never losing sight of the weakness of our nature, and the arduous struggle we are called to—but above all, keeping in view the glorious object we are seeking to obtain. I avail myself of every train of thought, to enable me to perfect myself for that high honour to which I am called; and, remembering that all our present privileges, and great and precious promises, are given for the purpose of making us partakers of a divine nature (or disposition) I accustom myself to call up in my mind not only the present advantages which Christianity affords, but all those glorious prospects which, if we are faithful to the end, it holds out to us in future. I call to remembrance, and impress the thought as deeply as possible on my mind, that I have been, not only by the kindness and mercy of God, “*purged from my old sins,*”—but that I am called to glory and to virtue; that in this state of trial and of hope, I am but preparing and becoming fitted to enjoy the highest state of happiness in myself—and, also, to be the instrument, in a

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“Tolerant designs.
These, and such as these, are the means, my friend, by
I am enabled to obtain and keep alive those pious
religious feelings of which you are now so exceedingly
anxious to become possessed. But let me not here be
misunderstood. By religious feelings, I do not mean those
nervous excitations to which even bad men may work them-
selves up—which gratify our pride for the moment, and,
when the excitement ceases, leave a void that cannot be
standing up. The religious feeling to which I refer, is that

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life, will afford us frequently periods of pleasure and delight which the world cannot understand.

“ Which nothing earthly gives or can destroy,
The mind's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy.”

“ Thus, having our minds deeply imbued with a sense of our high privileges and expectations, we shall not be disposed to think lightly of any of the means necessary for so glorious an object; but anxiously endeavour to *“ add to our faith fortitude, temperance, patience, piety, brotherly kindness, and universal benevolence ;”* knowing, *“ that if these things be in us, and abound, they will make us that we shall be neither barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but so an abundant entrance shall be administered unto us into his everlasting kingdom.”*

“ Thus, my dear friend, I have, with much thought and reflection, endeavoured to comply with your request;—whether or not I have hit upon the best method, time and experience must prove. My grand object has been to shew you the nature and consequences of your constitutional disposition—to furnish you with materials for reflection—and to point out the means which appear to me most efficacious for obtaining or preserving those religious feelings which are so essential to the happiness of the man, and to the character of the Christian. And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his favour which is able to build you up, and to give you an exalted situation among the holy and the good;—and I pray our heavenly Father that he will bless my feeble endeavours, and enable you to rise superior to every difficulty, either of disposition or circumstances; causing you so strongly to feel the great blessings and high privileges to which you are called, as to make you *“ fear always ;”* and with the Apostle Paul, count all other things as nothing when compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and, after the example of our Master, make it your meat and your drink to do the will of God. May our God and Father bless you and yours; and be to you, as he has been to me—a guide, protector, father and friend! May your virtues, attainments and usefulness so far surpass any thing that I can pretend to, that in comparison I may only be remembered as an instrument—a very humble one—that contributed to cultivate and mature your character! And may that principle of *retrospection* to which I have referred, so animate your mind, and stimulate your efforts to future excellence, that it may

prove to you, what it is capable of becoming—the Christian's surest safeguard—and lead you on to holiness of mind and perfection of character! I remain, my dear Friend,

“Your Friend and Brother

“In the Gospel of the blessed God,
“————.”



THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD OPPOSED TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

ESSAY IV.—THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE.

“The more any man is convinced of the immortality of the soul, from the principles of Aristotle or Des Cartes, the less will he concern himself about the gospel account of futurity.”—*Archdeacon Blackburn.*

WE commenced the series of Essays under the title affixed to the present one, with the design of shewing, from a view both of nature and the scriptures, that the doctrine which teaches that man is animated by an immaterial and immortal principle, is undiscoverable from the one, and stands in direct opposition to what is taught in the other.

The evidence from nature we brought to a conclusion in our last number;—that upon the scriptural department of our subject, we are now about to enter upon; the investigation of which we shall briefly preface by a reference to one or two documents, which in their day carried with them no mean authority. The first is a canon which was passed under Leo X. by the council of Lateran; and will not be found deficient in the qualities which similar statements generally possess, whether of Catholic or of Protestant origin. “Some have *dared* to assert concerning the nature of the reasonable soul, that it is mortal; *we*, with the approbation of the *sacred council*, do *condemn and reprobate all such*, seeing, according to the canon of Pope Clement the Fifth, that the soul is immortal; and we strictly inhibit all from dogmatising otherwise: and we decree, that all who adhere to the like erroneous assertions, shall be shunned and punished as heretics.”—*Caranza*, page 412—1681.

And among the Protestants, says Archdeacon Blackburn, the honour of condemning such as dissented from Plato and Socrates, was reserved for our English reformers in 1552; whilst on the Continent, when, four years afterwards, the second Helvetic Confession was published, supposed to have been drawn up by Beza, under the article entitled "*The Creation of all Things, of Angels, the Devil, and Man,*" it is solemnly announced, after a description of the qualities of the soul, as well as those of the body—"That we condemn all who scoff at the immortality of the soul, or bring it into doubt by subtle disputation."

For ourselves, undismayed, as well as unconvinced, by these and other documents of an equally formidable description, we are content to rest our faith upon the scriptures of truth, rather than upon the "canon of Pope Clement the Fifth," although his holiness proclaims so authoritatively that "the soul is immortal:" and we fully coincide upon this subject with the dignitary of the English church, already quoted, that "the Protestants, either unable or unwilling to investigate the meaning of certain terms used in the scriptures, weakly concluded, from the mere sound of them, that the doctrines of the scriptures, and the reigning philosophy" (concerning a future state) "were one and the same thing." What that reigning philosophy was, and, to a certain extent, still remains, we have been engaged in exposing;—and what those "*certain terms*" are, which, from their "*mere sound,*" have been pressed into the service of this philosophy, we are now about to inquire; previous to our doing which, in consequence of the obscurity which those who defend the soul's immortality have cast upon this subject, we deem the recognition of certain positions desirable, as well for the right conduct of the argument, as for bringing the evidence home to the reader's mind. We would maintain then,

Firstly—That from an investigation of nature a distinct, spiritual, and immortal principle in man *not* being discoverable, we can believe in such from *revelation* only; and that explicitly conveyed, and not in such ambiguous terms as to be capable of being misunderstood, or applied to any other subject.

Secondly—That a mere *popular* belief among the Jews, in doctrines which have not been revealed *expressly* by God himself, cannot be received as evidence of the truth of such doctrines. And,

Thirdly—That the language of the scriptures should be

taken agreeably to the sense in which it was understood and intended by the parties composing them, and in connection with the context and general scope of the writers.

Thus endeavouring to establish definite conceptions as to what is and what is not admissible evidence on such a subject, we proceed to an examination of the Old and New Testaments, with regard to the existence of a soul in man, its immateriality, and inherent immortality; carrying with us the important position maintained by its supporters—that upon the truth of that doctrine depends *our only hopes of future existence*: we therefore, on account of the extreme importance thus attaching to the subject, anticipate a ready acquiescence in the principle we have first laid down—that in so vital a feature of our faith, the scriptural evidence in its support should be clear, distinct and intelligible—and not, as is singularly and reluctantly, though certainly with much honesty, admitted by its strenuous advocate, Archbishop Tillotson, “*That the immortality of the soul is rather supposed, or taken for granted, than expressly revealed in the Bible.*”—Sermons, vol. ii—1774. We hope, however, to prove that the bishop is in error, even as regards what he supposes to be thus *taken for granted* in the Bible.

It will avail little to the argument that the mere word “soul” is to be found in our Bibles—for words, taken alone and independant of their meaning and connection, do not, and cannot establish doctrines. To illustrate this latter assertion, we might instance that all-important tenet in the faith of believers—the existence and attributes of the Divine Being: for, upon reference to the Scriptures, it will be found that the word “God,” were there nothing but the term itself, would fail in conveying to us either that there was *one only* God, or that he was a self-existent Being; for even this word is applied in the Scriptures to mere men. The recurrence, likewise, however frequent it may be, of the word SPIRIT, or SOUL, any more than that of the word “God,” must fail, if adduced, to establish of *itself* leading and important, or indeed any doctrines whatever. Nor, looking at the language of the scriptures, will the argument of our opponents be aided, should we even concede to them that the Jews believed in the existence of spirits, and their interference, in bodily shapes, with human affairs; for, besides that we should call upon them to prove the consistency of such alleged

appearances with their own definitions of what they term an immortal soul; namely, that it is immaterial—ærial—not visible to the sight, nor tangible to the touch: besides all this, it should be remembered that the Jewish nation, having emerged from one heathen people, and having frequently been captive among others, had naturally imbibed much of the false philosophy, and many of the absurd notions and speculations of such nations; and their history shews us the almost herculean labour which Moses and the prophets had to encounter, in order to purge out from among them their old impurities. This people, also, as is well known, evinced, upon too many occasions, in the early part of their history, a proneness towards idolatry, and were disposed to believe in the existence and power of false gods; so that any opinions held by them, which were not derived either from their divinely appointed teachers (not any of whom, it will be hereafter shewn, ever even glanced at the immaterial doctrine) cannot be entitled to the slightest weight in the argument. Upon this principle, therefore, it will be seen that the present discussion cannot be aided, by a reference to the unauthorized opinions of the Jewish people. Should it even appear that the first followers of Jesus held such views—that some of his immediate disciples (being Jews) should have shared in the popular faith—or that even Jesus himself, when addressing the multitude, made use of language not in contradiction to it, (such alone being that which they could comprehend) even these combined facts would neither teach the truth of the doctrine, nor prove that its belief was inculcated by revealed religion. The case of demoniacal possessions might be adduced in support of this position; for this doctrine has for its support all the points of authority above referred to, namely, the popular belief of the Jews, the language of Jesus and his apostles, &c.; yet the most enlightened Biblical critics have proved that it is the cure of certain diseases only which is intended to be conveyed to the reader—that no doctrine of revelation is at all in question—and that the ambiguity arises merely from the use of common language, which was necessarily in accordance with the prevailing belief and superstition. So that, if the mere opinions of the Jewish populace can aid the cause of our opponents on the present subject, then they must take the consequences of their own argument, by having it applied to other cases; and admit, for example, that Mary Magdalen was not cured of an inveterate mental disease, but had actually

expelled from within her seven devils. But it is not thus that the scriptures announce valuable truths and essential principles; for when such are communicated, they have not for their basis the prejudices of the ignorant, nor are we left to collect them in a doubtful, or an inferential manner.

Had, therefore, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul been a true one—and had it been intended to have been revealed at all, it would doubtless have been communicated in a manner equally distinct, because equally required to be so, as that of the existence of but one God—of pardon upon repentance; and of the resurrection from the dead. Thus, to illustrate our meaning, when we turn to the scriptures, we find God and his providence spoken of in the following clear and distinct manner—“*I, the Lord, speak righteousness; I declare things that are right, who hath declared this from ancient time—have not I the Lord, and THERE IS NO GOD ELSE BESIDE ME—a just God and Saviour—THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME; look unto me and be ye saved, from all the ends of the earth, for I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE.*” (Isaiah, xlv. 20—23.) And wherever the prophets or apostles reason upon the being and attributes of the Deity, they are, alike with the above—clear, distinct, and intelligible. Thus, in the instance of Paul, when addressing the Athenian philosophers—“*whom ye worship, him declare I unto you—God that made the world, and all things therein; who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as though he needed any thing; seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.*” (Acts, xvii. 23, 24.) Now, we ask, can any man, upon what is here stated, doubt even for a moment but that the writers here meant to convey the oneness, the power, and attributes of the Supreme Being? The announcement, too, of the forgiveness of sins upon repentance, and that of a future state of existence, by means of a resurrection from the dead, are equally clear and intelligible;* and can we believe it possible, had the immateriality and immortality of the soul been a Bible doctrine, that it would not have been taught with equal plainness and distinctness? and if so, it then would not have required support from popular ignorance—it would not have solicited aid from

* In relation to the first of these doctrines consult the following passages: Mat. iii. 2; iv. 17. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts v. 31; xi. 18; xxvi. 20. And upon the latter, see Acts iv. 22. 1 Cor. xv.

Socrates or Plato, neither could it obtain elucidation from Catholic councils or Protestant confessions of faith; nor would it, like the system which Tillotson advocates, be required "*to be rather supposed or taken for granted*;" but it would be, what he *allows* it is *not*, if "*not expressly*" "revealed," yet, at least, "*expressly*" stated in the scriptures. The archbishop's admission, indeed, upon this point, we must consider to be of no mean service in the present controversy, seeing that it puts into the hands of his opponents a triumphant weapon against his own doctrine; for neither Jesus nor the Apostles required *their* adherents to take their principles "*for granted*;" and it is difficult, if not absurd, to conceive that the sole foundation of the Christian's future hopes should rest upon a doctrine *allowed* by its advocates to be "*NOT EXPRESSLY TAUGHT IN THE* "*BIBLE.*"

Not, however, availing ourselves of those concessions which the most ingenious defenders of the soul have felt themselves compelled to make, nor of the entire absence of that clear and distinct evidence which ought to be the essential character of a doctrine claiming, as this does, preeminent importance—we shall still proceed in the inquiry, being desirous of going most fully into every branch of it. We commence, therefore, with an examination of the terms SOUL and SPIRIT, and the several senses in which they are used by the original writers, as well as by the translators of the scriptures; such being the cause, in a very material degree, of the misconceptions which clog the present inquiry. Referring, therefore, to the meaning in the original of the words from whence they are derived, the Hebrew term NEPHESH, admits, it appears, of the following renderings: *mind*; *soul*; *breath*; *life*. The Greek word PSUCHE, may be translated, *breath*; *life*; (whether of man or beast) *the body*; (whether dead or alive) *soul*; *spirit*; *mind*; or *person*: whilst, in other languages, the word rendered soul would appear to be nearly as indefinite. Thus the Latin ANIMA, signifies *life*; *soul*; *body*; *breath*; *wind*; in our own language, also, the word soul, from the Saxon SÆL, is used so variously, that Johnson and others give it the following meanings: *soul*; *spirit*; *life*; *mind*. The word SPIRIT has a different derivation, although it is frequently used in the original, and more so in the common translation of the scriptures, as a convertible term with that of soul. Its original in the Hebrew is RUACH, which denotes *spirit*; *the power of the*

Deity; mind; vigour; life; breath; person. The Greek word PNEUMA,* is rendered, *spirit; wind; the air.* The Latin, SPIRITUS, is rendered, *spirit; mind; soul; wind; breath;—to blow;—to breathe;—to draw in and throw out the air by the lungs;—a blast of wind.* And, in our language, nearly, if not the whole of these several meanings, are attached to the word spirit.

Such, then, being the facts with respect to these terms, we may proceed, with definite conceptions, to an examination of the manner, as far as this doctrine is concerned, in which the really difficult and important task of translation has been executed, in our authorized version of the scriptures, performed, as it was, under royal authority. Seeing that so great a latitude of interpretation was before the parties, we contend that certain fixed principles should have guided them; and that they ought, if such were at their disposal, to have either selected such terms as could not by possibility have led to misconception, and have rejected all which were of a doubtful or an equivocal meaning; or, if they were determined to retain the latter, then they should have used them without favour or affection, equally in *all* cases; so that the very connection in which they would have been found constantly to occur, must have enabled the ordinary reader to understand their general import; as by finding them regularly in passages which were plain and definite, such uses of the words would naturally be employed for the purpose of explaining those which were less so; but, in truth, neither of these rules have been systematically followed, arising possibly from the circumstance that the scriptures were parcelled out to a great number of persons for translation, who being also professors of orthodox and mystical doctrines, would naturally feel inclined to bend the text to their own conceptions. In illustration of this assertion, we will submit, for the purpose of comparison, a few instances of an adherence to, as well as a departure from, a faithful rendering into English of the terms *nephesh* and *psuche*, and those of *ruach* and *pneuma*. Thus, in the case of the address of the King of Sodom to Abraham, the discretion of the translators has been correctly exercised:—“*Give me the persons,*” (*souls*, as it is elsewhere rendered) “*and take the goods to thyself.*” (Gen.

* That branch of physical science which is devoted to the study of the air, is from this word termed *pneumatics*.

xiv. 21.) But in the Jewish law, as contained in Leviticus, the same term is there rendered soul; and that, too, in a case where, from the connection, it is equally self-evident that it should have been person. "*And whatsoever man there be that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul (person) that eateth blood; for the life of the flesh*" (the soul of the flesh—the source of life) "*is in the blood.*" (Leviticus xvii. 10, 11.) In the book of Lamentations, where the instances are really as plain—though, from the difference of the subject treated upon, capable of some perversion, the translator presents us with the term *soul*, which would have been rendered, with more propriety, in one case *mind*, and in the other *person*. "*The Lord is my portion, saith my soul* (mind). "*The Lord is good unto the soul (person) that seeketh him.*" (Lam. iii. 24, 25.)

So also with the Greek term "*pneuma*," the same obliquity is prevalent in the translation: this may be illustrated by the instance of Paul, when shewing the Corinthians that it is the mind of God which knoweth the things of God, and the mind of man which knoweth the things of man. "*For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit*" (mind) "*of man, which is within him.*" (1 Cor. ii. 11.) Here the translators have chosen a term, *spirit*, likely to be misconceived when one, that of *mind*, which could not by possibility be so, was equally at their service. In other cases, however, they have pursued the opposite course; as where they have correctly rendered the term "*pneuma*"—wind, in the address of Jesus to Nicodemus: "*The WIND (pneuma) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.*" (John iii. 8.) Now every authority and argument which could justify the use of the word *spirit*, instead of *mind*, in the former passage, would equally have justified the use of *spirit* instead of that of *wind*, in the one last-quoted. The translators should in the one case, as in the other, have exercised a sound discretion in the choice of an English phrase, which would have given a sense correspondent with the context, and with the evident intention of the writer; or they should, in both cases, have made use of the indefinite terms *soul* or *spirit*, when the reader would have felt the necessity, by a comparison of various passages—and by bringing, as we have said, the most plain to illustrate the most difficult ones, of finding for himself that peculiar sense

of the word, in each case, with which the translator had failed to supply him.

Having thus glanced at the lax principles upon which the translation of the scriptures has been conducted, we shall proceed to an examination of every important passage in them which has been held to teach, or in any way support the immateriality and immortality of the soul: and as in this, more perhaps than in most controversies, it is desirable to have definite positions for examination, we shall, in the absence of such on the side of the defenders of immaterialism, aim at supplying their deficiency, by classing, under three heads, what we conceive will faithfully and fully embrace every part of their system.

First, then, they contend, on the ground of scripture, that God imparts to, and also withdraws from, the body of man, an immaterial, immortal soul or spirit. *Secondly*, that the apostles and prophets, on various occasions, sanction, by their language, a belief in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. *Thirdly*, that the scriptures indirectly support this doctrine, by teaching that there is an intermediate state of life after the death of the body, until the general resurrection; the inference being this, that therefore there must be a soul, because in the grave the body is entirely decomposed. As these positions, particularly the two first of them, are mainly supported by a reference to passages of scripture, in which the Hebrew and Greek terms occur, to which we have already referred as so variously rendered—we purpose, previously to an examination of particular passages, to make a brief classification of the various senses in which these words have been, or should be taken. For the purpose of explicitness, and also for ease of reference, we class them under the following arrangement—(a) Breath; (b) Life; (c) Person; (d) Body; (e) Wind or Air; (f) Mind, and the Affections. From the passages which we shall submit in support of this classification, it will further incidentally be proved that, whilst in many instances our translators have correctly chosen that term which best accorded with the sense of the original—yet that in most, if not in every case where, in our common version, the word soul or spirit occurs, one or other of the above words should in preference have been selected, as better expressing the sense of the original.

Commencing with (a) BREATH. In Genesis, where the relation is given of the destruction by the flood, it is said, "*All flesh died that moved upon the earth; of fowls, of cattle,*

"and of beasts, and all in whose nostrils was the **BREATH**" (in the original the same term which in other and similar passages is rendered *soul* or *spirit*) "*of life, that was in the dry land, died.*" The *breath*, or *soul*, here clearly belongs equally to the beast as to man. From this passage we pass on to one in the book of Ecclesiastes; where the translators, having chosen the word "*spirit*," instead of "*breath*," a most absurd conclusion has been drawn from the passage; the plain and forcible reflection of Solomon, upon the brevity of human life, being construed, or rather tortured into a defence of the doctrine of an immortal soul! "*For that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; YEA, THEY HAVE ALL ONE BREATH—all go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*" (See Eccles. iii. 19, &c.) Thus far all is simple and correct on the part of our translators; but, apprehending, we presume, danger from materialism being taught from the mouth of Solomon, they confuse and mystify his reflections, by abandoning their former word *breath*, and substituting that of *spirit*; and that, too, in the verse immediately following, and in the same connection. "*Who knoweth the SPIRIT*" (*breath*) "*of man that goeth upwards, and the SPIRIT*" (*breath*) "*of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?*" (Eccles. iii. 21.) Here insert the word—used by the translators themselves in the preceding verses—*breath*, and no difficulty occurs. Man's figure being erect, his *spirit* or *breath* goeth upwards; and that of beasts being the contrary, their *spirit* or *breath* descendeth; the argument and conclusion of the writer being, that when they cease to breathe, then the existence of each is ended; man, equally with the beast, turning to the dust from whence he came. *Breath* is thus used as the means, or rather the evidence of the possession of life, by various authors; as in our language, by Shakespeare,

"She shows a body, rather than a life—

"A statue, than a breather."

Anthony and Cleopatra, Act iii., Scene 3.

Plutarch, too, represents the infant in the womb as nourished by nature like a plant, but when it is brought forth, as being "*refreshed and hardened by the air till it becomes a breathing living animal.*" And, in the satires of Perseus, the word *soul* is used as expressive of *breath*—

"Thy wives' souls (*breath*) stink."

And the term is correctly rendered breath, in the early part of Genesis, in the relation of the covenant with Noah. "*Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, wherein is the BREATH (spirit) of life: from under heaven, and every thing that is in the earth, shall die.*" (Gen. vi. 17). So, in perfect accordance with this understanding of the word, the apostle Paul describes the Deity to the heathen philosophers as a "*God that made the world, and all things therein, and giveth to ALL*" (beasts, in common with man) "*life, (soul) and breath, (spirit) and all things.*" Acts xvii. 25.

(b) LIFE. The word *soul*, which should have been rendered *life*, occurs, among other instances throughout the scriptures, in the book of Job thus, in the reply to Zophar. "*I am as one mocked of his neighbour; the just and upright man is laughed to scorn: but ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; and the fishes of the sea, they shall declare unto thee—the hand of the Lord hath wrought this, in whose hand is the SOUL*" (life) "*OF EVERY LIVING THING.*" (Job xii. 10.) And such life, or soul, or spirit, is represented as existing in the blood. Hence Noah and his sons are commanded not to eat flesh which contained blood: thus, "*Flesh with the LIFE (soul) thereof, which is the blood thereof, ye shall not eat.*" (Gen. ix. 4.) And in the levitical service, the blood which is commanded to be poured out on the altar of burnt-offerings, and some of which would necessarily run under the altar, is described as being the *life* (soul or spirit) of the animal which had been offered in sacrifice. Zenophon likewise uses the Greek term, rendered soul, in a corresponding meaning—

"*Ye have preserved your SOULS*" (lives)—

"*He hath deprived my dear and only son of soul*" (of life.)

And in a corresponding sense the Latin term *anima* is used by Virgil—

"*He vomits forth his purple soul*" (blood—life.)

(c) PERSON. In the triumph of the Israelites over the five kings, Joshua relates, that "*the Lord delivered them into the hands of Israel, who smote them, and left none remaining: and he smote all the SOULS,*" (persons) "*utterly destroying them, and there was not any left to breathe.*" (Joshua xi. 11, &c.) See also in the book of Numbers, when Eleazar the priest commands the Jews in what manner they shall divide their spoil, in which place the word soul is used

as applicable equally to beasts and to men. "*Divide the prey into two parts; between those that went out to battle, and between all the congregation, and levy a tribute unto the Lord; one SOUL out of five hundred of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the sheep.*" (Numb. xxxi. 28.)

In the New Testament the same line of remark is in an equal degree applicable, as when Peter is addressing the Jews in the temple; he warns them, that as Moses had taught, "*The Lord your God would raise up unto you a prophet; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you; and it shall come to pass that every SOUL*" (person) "*that will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed.*" (Acts iii. 23.)

(d) BODY. In the Mosaic law, relative to the vow of the Nazarites, the Jews are commanded—"All the days that they separate themselves, they shall come at no dead BODY;" (in Hebrew NEPHESH, dead soul.) And in the book of Numbers, where commands are given at greater length not to touch any dead person, we shall, for the purpose of more clearly shewing the absurdity which attends the use of the term soul, insert the greater portion of the law upon that subject. "*He that toucheth the dead body of any man, shall be unclean seven days;*" (in Hebrew, and in the marginal readings, "*the dead soul of any man.*") "*Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead,*" (dead soul that is dead) "*and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that SOUL*" (person) "*shall be cut off from Israel. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain, or a DEAD BODY*" (dead soul) "*or a bone of him*" (bone of a soul) "*shall be unclean seven days;—for an UNCLEAN PERSON*" (unclean soul) "*shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer for the purification for sin; but the man that shall not purify himself, THAT SOUL*" (that man) "*shall be cut off from among the congregation; and whatsoever the unclean person*" (unclean soul) "*toucheth shall be unclean; and that SOUL*" (person) "*that toucheth it, shall be unclean until even.*" (Numbers xix. 11 to end.)

(e) WIND, or AIR. The powers of the Deity are thus described by Amos:—"*Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel! for lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the WIND;*" (in Hebrew RUACH, the soul or spirit) "*the Lord, the God of hosts is his name.*" (Amos iv. 13) So, in Zechariah's vision: the four spirits there described are the four winds. "*Then I answered, and said unto the angel,*" (messenger) "*that talked with me, what are these? and the angel*" (messenger) "*answered, these are the four spirits*" (or four winds) "*of the heavens.*" (Zechariah vi. 5.)

In a similar sense the Latin phrase *spiritus*, whence the English word *spirit* is immediately derived, is used by Virgil—

“ When the northern blast (*spiritus*)
“ Roars in the *Ægean*.”

And the English word *ghost*, being of the same root with *gust* of wind, is often used in such a sense by our old writers. Thus Sydney represents Lucretia as having been precipitated into such a love fit, that in a few hours “ *she ghosted*,” and in the same sense, in the received version of the scriptures and elsewhere, to “ *give up the ghost*,” is used for the giving up of life, and the ceasing to *breathe*, as the means of life.

(f) MIND, AND THE AFFECTIONS. Thus Jesus, when quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, concerning himself—“ *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my SOUL*” (mind) “ *is well pleased*.” (Matt. xii. 18.) So in the Acts—“ *The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one SOUL*” (mind.) (Acts iv. 32.) Also, as descriptive of the affections of the mind—“ *Shechem’s SOUL clave unto Dinah, and he loved the damsel*.” (Gen. xxxiv. 8.) “ *The SOUL of Jonathan was knit with the SOUL of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own SOUL*.” (1 Sam. xviii. 1.) “ *Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your SOUL delight in fatness*.” (Isaiah lv. 2.) See also Paul’s address to the church at Thessalonica—“ *We were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own SOULS, because ye were dear to us*.” (1 Thess. ii. 8.)

From these several cases, thus classed, it will appear that the phrases rendered soul and spirit, are all of them capable of a translation which does not imply or give the least support to the doctrine of an immortal, immaterial principle in man, distinct from his body, and from what may be called his animal life. It has, indeed, been well said, on what is considered orthodox authority, “ *that this word in scripture, especially in the style of the Hebrews, is very equivocal* ;” * such then being the fact—we ask, why have not our translators, in rendering such a word into English, selected terms which are not “ *very equivocal*,” as such were clearly at their disposal? Or why have they *sometimes* retained the words soul and spirit, together with the superstitious ideas which custom

* Cruden’s Concordance. Article “*s. pl.*”

has attached to those words, and at others, the sense and context being precisely similar—rendered them, as we have seen above, by intelligible phrases as life, breath, &c. ? At any rate, to have been consistent, they should either always have avoided the use of these phrases, (soul and spirit) or have always employed them. One inference, however, flows directly from the above classification; namely, that the mere terms soul or spirit, thus arbitrarily adopted by our translators, ought not, and cannot be esteemed to teach, or in any way to support the doctrine of the immateriality and immortality of the soul.

Having thus cleared the way, by ascertaining the meaning of the terms so frequently employed in this controversy, we can now, with advantage, proceed to the investigation of that class of passages which comes under the first position—"That God, at the creation of man, imparts to, and, at his death, withdraws from the body, an immaterial and immortal soul." Taking first the history of the creation, as recorded in the book of Genesis, when, after the heavens and the earth were formed, God having made every living thing after its kind, then man was called into being, and allowed to have dominion over all other animals, we are told that "*the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living SOUL.*" (Gen. ii. 7.) That is, a living person—a living body—a breathing, living man; any of these forms of expression being, not merely allowable, but actually more faithful to the idea in the original, than is the term SOUL, as must, from the preceding remarks, be self-evident; but had our translators, in their use of this word, only been consistent even throughout these two first chapters of the book of Genesis, we should not anticipate that a defender of immaterialism would resort for argument to the Mosaic account of creation: for eight verses only previous to the one just quoted, we are informed, that God said, "*let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath LIFE;*" in Hebrew the same term elsewhere rendered soul—and the margin of even the old English translation more consistently reads "*that hath soul.*" And, in the 30th verse of the first chapter, every green herb is offered for meat "*to every BEAST of the earth, and to every FOWL of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is LIFE.*" In the Hebrew the same word as that rendered soul, and in the margin of our old Bibles—"To every thing that creepeth upon the earth

"*which hath a LIVING SOUL.*" But, without placing, which we well might do, our reliance upon, *first*, the acknowledged meaning of the term in the original; and, *secondly*, the application of the words "a living soul," equally to every thing which "*creepeth upon the earth,*" as to man, we look at what is supposed the most difficult passage, the 7th verse of the 2d chapter; as it stands in the common translation: God, we are told, out of the dust of the earth, "*formed man;*" that is, the *whole* man; not a part of him, not a mere shell, but the entire and perfect machine: the materials with which this machine was formed are described as being, not in part, but solely "*the dust of the ground:*" they were material therefore, and perishable—not immaterial and immortal. "*And he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life:*" the formation of the machine proceeding (for the relation is given in accordance with human language, as though there had been three stages in man's becoming a living person or soul) the air entering into the nostrils—the lungs become inflated—the heart beats—the blood circulates—and this organized machine, as a natural consequence, "*becomes a living person or soul.*" The process of creation in the vegetable world is described in a similar manner—"These "*are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens; and every plant of the field BEFORE it was in the earth, and every herb of the field BEFORE it grew.*" Thus far the earth, the heavens, the herbs, and the plants, are described as having, like man, been "*formed;*" but a something additional is still, in both cases, required for perfecting the thing so made. In regard to the former, "*the Lord God had NOT caused it to rain upon the earth;*" consequently though made, it was not fertile; and the "*plant of the field,*" and "*the herb of the field,*" could not vegetate or grow, but "*there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the face of the earth:*" then, but not till then, the earth brought forth plenteously, and the plant and the herb "*grew;*" consequently this "*mist,*" and the rain which ensued, were to vegetables the cause, or principle, of life, in the same way that the breath, which passed through man, was so to him; for as it was the rain which caused the plants and the herbs already formed, *to grow*—so it was likewise the breath, or vital air, and not any immaterial immortal principle, which, passing through the lungs of man, already created, caused him *to breathe*, and *move*, and *live*, and he forthwith *became a living being*. The process

of vegetable life began in the one case—the process of animal life in the other. In support of this view, let it be observed, that the language is that “man became a living soul,” not that he *received* a soul; he—himself—the *whole* man, thus formed from the dust of the earth, *was* the soul—the person—perfect and complete but not set in motion; and when the air or breath of life had passed through the tubes and the valves of this complicated, this beautiful, this wonderful machine! then it was that man “*became*” a living soul or person.

As already observed, it is not to man alone that the expression *soul* is applied. The previous explanation of the word renders this intelligible; but how can those who associate with the term ideas of immortality, &c. how can *they* explain this? In the preceding chapter, every “*beast of the earth*,” and every “*fowl of the air*,” are described as becoming “*living souls*,” upon precisely the same principle as man; and this sense of the word will be seen to run through Milton’s almost literal adaptation of the first chapter of Genesis:—

“And God said, ‘let the waters generate,
Reptile with spawn abundant, *living soul* :
And God created the great whales, and each
Soul living—each that crept—which pleuteously
The waters generated by their kinds.
—— He formed thee, Adam—thee, Oh man,
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
The breath of life—
And thou becam’st a *living soul*.”—*Paradise Lost*, Book 7.

Returning to the book of Genesis, we find in the destruction occasioned by the flood, that a similar mode of description is applied not to man only, but to “*fowls*,” to “*cattle*,” to “*beasts*,” and to “*creeping things* ;” for “*all in whose nostrils was the BREATH*” (soul) “*of life, of all that was in the dry land died*.” (Gen. vii. 22.) Thus also, when the prophet Isaiah would represent the total insignificance of man, he exclaims, “*Cease ye from man, whose BREATH*” (soul) “*is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of*.” (Isaiah ii. 22.) So in Job also, where Elihu is addressing the Deity, “*The Spirit of God hath made me; the BREATH of the Almighty hath given me life*.” (Job xxxiii. 4.) We are therefore perfectly willing to take the often-quoted verse from the second of Genesis with the fullest latitude that can be given to the words as they stand, without even availing ourselves of the correct and original meaning of the term rendered *SOUL*, and the passage then conveys this distinct information— that God created man from the dust

of the ground; that he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man *became* a *living soul*—consequently and necessarily he was, *BEFORE* that event, a *soul*: not a *living* one, certainly; not animated, but yet he *was* a soul—the whole, and not a part of him, being such. The interpreter, therefore, of this passage, who should attempt to deduce from it the doctrine of the soul's separate existence, its immaterial and inherent immortality, is placed upon one or other of the horns of this dilemma, one of which he must necessarily choose; either, first, that the word soul in this passage should have been rendered person; and consequently, man's becoming a living soul, in that sense, is altogether foreign to the subject of an immortal soul: or, secondly, that if man were a soul, *before* he became a *living* one, then the immateriality and inherent immortality of the soul is without a basis.

A like instance of the injury done to the scriptures by the retention of phrases which do not convey the original meaning, occurs in the 1st book of Kings, where common sense points out that the word "*life*" should have been inserted instead of "*soul*;" from an inattention to which is to be dated whatever confusion or misconception may have been attached to the passage. "*And it came to pass that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick, and his sickness was so sore, that there was no BREATH left in him.*" (xvii. 17.) From this relation, it may be observed, that it is not quite apparent whether or not the child was actually dead; as it appears, that after Elijah's prayer he "*revived*;" though in either case the miraculous power exercised by Elijah remains the same; and in either case, too, it is evident that our translators, in using the word SOUL, have improperly rendered the passage—" *And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God; art thou come unto me to call my sin to my remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, give me thy son; and he took him out of her bosom, and laid him upon his own bed, and he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee let this child's SOUL* (i. e. breath, or vigour) "*come unto him again: and the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the SOUL* (breath, or vigour) "*of the child came unto him again, and he revived.*" (1 Kings xvii. 21, &c.) An instance further illustrative of this case occurs in the 1st of Samuel, where an individual that had been engaged in battle, and fatigued, "*revives*;" and when he had partaken of food, "*his spirit*" (we are told) "*came into him again.*" "*David's*

"men found an Egyptian in the field," (who was fatigued) "and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water, and they gave him a piece of cake, of figs, and two clusters of raisins, for he had eaten no bread, nor drank any water for three days and three nights, and his SPIRIT came to him again." (1 Sam. xxx. 11, &c.)

So that, whether on the supposition of the widow's son having been actually dead, or otherwise, the relation is not that an immortal soul had escaped from within him, and, upon the prayer of the prophet, it came to him again; but that respiration having been suspended, either partially or otherwise, it was now restored to him; and his lungs operated upon by the air, he again breathed, and lived as before.

The word *spirit*, as it occurs in our common version, no less than that of *soul*, will be found to have misled scriptural inquirers: much stress having been laid upon the following and similar passages, merely because this term *spirit* is to be found therein, without any consideration as to its correct meaning, or any view to the connection in which it stands. "*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, for thou art my rock and my fortress; into thy hands I commit my SPIRIT,*" (my life) "*thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth.*" (Psalm xxxi. 1, &c.) Here the use of the word *life*, which, as we have seen, is completely justifiable, and used in other cases by our translators themselves, removes the assumed difficulty; and we then proceed connectedly with the remaining portion of the Psalmist's address, which clearly relates to *temporal* adversity. It is not an immortal soul or spirit, but his whole self of which he is speaking. "*I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul*" (thou hast known my mind—thou hast known me) "*in adversity:*" therefore, because of my knowledge of thy mercy—because thou hast considered me in my trouble—because I know "*how great is thy goodness,*" with full reliance upon that mercy and upon that goodness, I commit "*my spirit*" (my life) into thine hand; for "*I put my trust in the Lord.*"

Our next passage is one in the book of Ecclesiastes, which is much depended upon by our opponents on the present doctrine. "*Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not; when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them: in the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow them-*

" *selves, then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the SPIRIT*" (breath) "*shall return to God, who gave it.*" (Eccles. xii. 1, 7, &c.) From this passage Steffe* contends, in reply to Bishop Law, that Solomon here clearly recognizes the distinction between soul and body, by saying, that the dust shall return to the earth, and the spirit to God who gave it. The exhortations of "the preacher," if such were his object, in our judgment fail not only in distinctness of expression, but also in consistency with his own teaching. Let us look at the design of that part of his address in which these expressions occur; it was to impress upon men the importance of remembering their Creator in the days of their youth, as such remembrance only would lead them to happiness. Where, and when, let us ask? In a and future immortal state of existence? No, but here on earth; until that period when the dust, or frail materials of which they were composed, should *return to the earth from whence it came, and their life*" (or spirit) "*return to God who had given it:*" a mode of expression naturally arising from the circumstances of the case; and, among other passages, in accordance with and illustrative of the language of the Psalmist, who exhorts his hearers that they should trust only in God, and not in man—" *for man's BREATH goeth forth, and he*" (that is, *the whole, not a part of man*) "*returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish:*" (Ps. cxlvi. 4) consequently, if his *thoughts* thus perish, then must his *soul* perish; for it is the soul, and not the body, which is said to be the cause, as well as depository of the thoughts. In what condition, then, we ask, is the inherent *immortality* of this soul, which perishes in that very day in which his body returns to the dust?

The passage in the book of Numbers, in which Moses and Aaron address the Supreme Being as the "*God of the SPIRITS of ALL flesh,*" (Numb. xvi. 22) has been advanced, with much confidence, by our opponents; but they have conveniently glided over the word ALL, when in fact it contains the very *gist* of the remark; placing, as it does, the cause of life (or of spirit) throughout *the whole animal creation*, upon the same foundation; the Deity being described as the God of *the spirit, or life of every living thing*, whether man or beast; consistently with which view, the author of the book of Ecclesiastes, when dilating in the earlier part of his work,

* See "Two Letters on an Intermediate State, by John Steffe."—P. 71 to 75—edit. 1758.

upon creation, draws this conclusion; namely, "*that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; YEA, THEY HAVE ALL ONE breath,*" (or spirit) "*so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast; FOR ALL GO INTO ONE PLACE—ALL ARE OF THE DUST AND ALL TURN TO DUST AGAIN.*" (See Eccles. iii. 19, &c.) His very argument, as we have seen, is, that at the moment of death there is no longer any difference between man *whose breath* (improperly rendered *spirit*) *goeth upward, and the beast whose breath goeth downward to the earth.* Yet this writer, and in this very passage too, has been triumphantly quoted in favour of the existence of an immortal soul in man.

Again, to quote from the same authority, "*The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not any thing; neither have they any more a reward.*" (Eccles. ix. 5.) But if Solomon had believed, or intended to inculcate the belief in an immortal soul, he could not thus have argued; for, if man be animated by a spirit; if that spirit be distinct from, and independant of the body; if farther, it be in its own nature immortal; and if, on the return of the body to the dust from whence it came, the spirit (thus intellectual, independant, and immortal) goes *literally* to God, then Solomon's conclusions are false, and inconsistent with his own premises; for we have that within us which *does "know"* something when the body is dead, and which *has a "reward"* beyond the grave. Taking, indeed, the passages in Ecclesiastes as referring to an immortal soul or spirit, they are full of absurdities and contradictions: they teach that man, in point of duration of life, *has a superiority over the brute*; and at the same time declare, that he has no such superiority; they assert, that beyond the grave there is nothing, and yet are made to inculcate a belief that beyond the grave man shall have an *eternal existence*. But these are absurdities and contradictions introduced by commentators only: the passages *themselves*, being written before Jesus had "*brought life and immortality to light,*" by revealing the resurrection of the dead, and they simply are referring to and moralizing upon the mortality of man, *in common with the beast*, and the brevity of human life and human enjoyments.

From the teaching of Solomon, we pass on to the words uttered by Stephen immediately preceding his death, in which the doctrine of the soul's leaving the body, has been supposed to be discoverable. "*And they cast him out of the city, and stoned him,*"—"he calling upon God" (as

in the received version, but the word "God" is not in the original) "*calling upon, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" (Acts vii. 58, 59.)

This passage is held to be a decisive one in support of immaterialism, at least so far as Stephen's authority can be so considered. A more correct translation, however, of the original, by the substitution of the word *life* for that of *spirit*—the sense of the passage proving that the former is, in this instance, the more correct phrase—removes the principal source of obscurity; the only remaining difficulty being that which arises from the peculiarity of expression *receive my life*, or *receive me*; but even if such can be esteemed an objection, it applies with the same force to "*receive my spirit*:" the case, however, would appear to be, that it is, as we have seen in the 30th psalm, a scriptural mode of expressing a confidence *in*, and a submission *to*, the will of God, even to the laying down of life in the furtherance of that will. An attention not confined to this single verse, but extended to the whole of the connecting circumstances may illustrate this view of the passage. Stephen, an appointed teacher of the will of God, being "*full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people*:" and certain of the Jews, who were unable "*to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake*," suborned men to give false testimony against him; but he continued proclaiming the will of God, and denouncing their general conduct, regardless of personal consequences: "*and when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*" At this moment, as it should seem, he was favoured with a miraculous, probably a visionary appearance of Jesus, doubtless for the purpose of administering support in the severe trial and suffering which then awaited him; for as he "*looked up stedfastly into heaven, he saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God*;" (that is, exalted to power) "*and he said, behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.*" They then ran upon and stoned him; but before the moment of his expiring, he addressed Jesus in the words upon which we are now remarking. We have seen what meaning is attached to corresponding expressions in other parts of the scriptures. Stephen therefore resorts to the same pious and effectual source for support under the severest trial and suffering which in this life could have befallen him; and he, being encouraged by the Lord and Master of that cause for which he was then suffering,

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"looked up stedfastly," and, at the moment of death, exclaimed, *"Lord Jesus receive my spirit;"* that is, receive my life—receive me. The words, to quote an acute and able author (Coward, p. 176), *"receive my spirit,"* argue "nothing but a free and voluntary resignation of his life to the will of God, and submitting himself to his mercy."

This view of the case of Stephen may be further illustrated by the words which Jesus himself used immediately preceding his own death. *"And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commit my SPIRIT;"* (my life) and it is added, *"having said this, he gave up the GHOST."* (See Luke xxvii. 46.) That is, gave up his breath, or life, either of these terms being equally true to the original; the relation simply being, that when on the cross, and after he had finished praying to his heavenly Father, and that too for his enemies, he resigned his life into the hands of God; having laid it down, in obedience to his will, and in the fullest confidence of the divine favour and protection.

We have now examined those passages of scripture in which it is supposed, or asserted, that at the moment of creation or birth an immortal soul is added to the body of man, and that the same leaves him at the hour of his death. We have seen that such positions are wholly without foundation; arising either from errors in the translation, or a misconception of the intentions of the writers. We purpose, in our next number, taking up successively the two remaining departments of the scripture passages; after which it is our intention to terminate this series of Essays, with proving, that our sole ground for believing in a future state of existence, rests upon the scriptural doctrine of a resurrection from the dead, which will consequently disprove the reputed immateriality and immortality of the soul, and tend to support the well-expressed opinions of the Bishop of Carlisle, that **"WHEN WE DULY EXAMINE THEM"** (the Scriptures), **"WE MAY POSSIBLY DISCERN THAT THE NATURAL IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN MIND IS NEITHER NECESSARILY CONNECTED WITH, NOR TO A CHRISTIAN ANY PROPER PROOF OF, A FUTURE STATE OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS."***

* See Appendix to the Theory of Religion, p. 435.

THE FREETHINKING CHRISTIANS' REVIEW OF THE
RELIGIOUS WORLD.

QUAKERISM.

"Wherefore, I am moved of the Lord to propound some few queries to you, for the trial of your spirits and ways, to which I demand your answer; that all things may be brought to light and true judgment; and that you may be judged justly; and, by the spirit of the Lord, cleared or condemned according to your deeds."—*Introduction to Burroughs' Queries to the Friars and Nuns of Dunkirk, 1659.*

The right of examining the pretensions and principles of those who claim to be the possessors of revealed truth, must belong to all who seek to make the religion of Jesus the object of their faith and the rule of their actions. To believe *not* every spirit, but to *try* the spirits, whether they be of God, is not less the dictate of reason, than it is one of the precepts of the gospel. The right, indeed, of every sect of religionists to inquire into the claims of every other sect, is mutual and unquestionable; and, perhaps, no denomination has used this right with greater freedom than the people called Quakers. This privilege we now claim to exercise against themselves;—imitating, in some measure, in our proposed inquiry, the freedom and fearfulness of their primitive apostles and saints; but, we trust, carefully avoiding their rudeness of manner and bitterness of spirit.

When honest *Edward Burroughs*, the contemporary and companion of *George Fox*, after having strolled about his own country preaching and prophesying against all parties in the state, and all denominations among the people, *had a concern* to visit Dunkirk, in order to *reach the minds* of the papists of that place, he held, in his printed address to them, the language quoted at the head of this article. Now, the same freedom of inquiry which this bold enthusiast avowed, on this occasion, the same scrutiny which he directed against the papists, we avow and direct against the Quakers. To the followers of Burroughs we say—"We too are moved to propound some few queries to YOU, for the trial of YOUR spirits and ways, to which we demand your answer; that all things may be brought to light and true judgment; and that you may be judged justly, and by the spirit (not, indeed, of the Lord, but) of truth; cleared or condemned according to YOUR DEEDS."

We have been induced to enter on this task by no hostility to the society of Friends. There are among this body, we can readily believe, many sincere well-meaning people, of quiet and inoffensive lives; who are living exemplars of all the passive virtues; and who move in their daily round of duties with strict, not to say mechanical, correctness. With some, also, of the doctrines, and with much of the discipline of this sect, we agree; more, perhaps, than with those of any other class of believers; but, at the same time, we must freely confess that we have little faith in that superior practical excellence, which some are so willing to ascribe to the Quakers, and which they, collectively and individually, are nothing loth to receive; upon the whole, indeed, so far from admitting this, we cannot but deem their principles and practices to be, in a very high degree, pernicious to the interests of real Christianity. Some remarks, offered by us in a former Review, upon the public conduct and obvious motives of a distinguished female leader of this sect, have called forth a champion in defence of this lady. Of the letter of our correspondent it would be uncandid to speak in terms of dispraise, before it is submitted to the judgment of the reader; we may, however, remark that, after having giving this communication our best attention, it has failed to produce our "*convincement*." The examination, however, into which we have been led by the communication of our correspondent, J.F., has directed our steps into a more particular inquiry, concerning the principles and practices, the early history, and the present state of the society, to which this lady attaches herself; and of which, considering her public services as a leader and *minister* of the body, she may, in some measure, be regarded as the representative. This inquiry, it is anticipated, will be esteemed by the reader as more important, and less invidious, than an examination merely of the public conduct of Mrs. Fry, which, however, we shall not fail to notice in due course; and, at the same time, if we shall succeed in proving the characteristics of her sect and faith to be, in a peculiar and especial degree, those of pride and high-mindedness—that such qualities are the natural results of Quakerism, and consequent upon the belief in its principles—we trust we shall not be deemed to have been wholly in error, in not regarding the case of Mrs. Fry as an exception to the rule which is so applicable to all the sect besides. This case, then, we propose to establish by an examination—

FIRST, Of the principles, practices, and early history of the society of Friends; and

• **SECONDLY**, By a comparison of these with their present spirit and proceedings; and with the principles and precepts of Christianity.*

We do not purpose, indeed, to adhere strictly to the division of the subject now laid down, as the reader will readily perceive that our inquiry is one of a mixed and general character; for the sake of distinctness, however, we shall endeavour to classify our observations as much under the above heads as is consistent with a free and popular investigation of our subject.

In an age abounding in fanaticism—and presenting, not less from its political turbulence, than from its religious extravagance, a marked and peculiar epoch in the history of our country—the Quakers first appeared in England. Singular as their principles and professions may now to us appear they were not *more* fanatical at the date of their first dawning than many other sects of visionaries who, at that time, disputed with them the palm of public folly, but which sects soon became extinct; whilst their scattered fragments served as the materials which were afterwards worked into, and tended to complete the superstructure of Quakerism. Speaking of the Separatists from the establishment, in the year 1646, *Neale* says—"Mr. Baxter mentions "Independents, Anabaptists, Antinomians, as the chief separatists; to whom he adds some other names, as *Seekers*, "*Ranters*, *Beheminists*, *Vanists*, all which died in their "infancy, or united with the people afterwards known by "the name of Quakers."—*History of the Puritans*, p. 252.

Besides these many of the miserable fanatics of Cromwell's army served, afterwards, to swell the train of the new sect; possessing, as they did, the convenient capability of being *converted* without the necessity of being *changed*. From the days of ORIGEN to those of GEORGE FOX the fatal principle has, to a greater or less extent, prevailed of *mystifying* the plain doctrines of the gospel. That distinguishing feature of Quakerism; the doctrine of the *inward light*, is but a modification of the *mystic theology*, which was imported direct from heathenism, and was known in the schools by the name of *modern Platonism*. The Quakers, therefore,

* In this division of our inquiry it is intended to insert the letter of our correspondent in defence of Mrs. Fry, and to exhibit the folly (however specious they may appear) of her "*labours of love*," among the heroines of the Newgate Calendar.

may carry up their system to the *learning* of AMMONIUS, instead of contenting themselves with tracing it to the *leather* of Fox.*

This sect, like the others alluded to by Neale, would, doubtless, have expired in its infancy, but for the admirable system of church union and discipline which, at an early period, was adopted by its members; and the continuance of which system it is that still binds their body together, now that their enthusiasm has become extinct, and that they walk abroad not less sane; and, perhaps, more prudent and calculating, than any other class of his Majesty's subjects. The mysticism of Fox owed much of its success to the circumstances of the times in which it was originally propagated. Political revolutions, which change the form, or, at least, convulse the whole frame of society, are generally found to supply fuel to fanaticism. Men's minds, exposed to strong excitement, and open to new impressions, refer the shiftings of the human scene to supernatural agency—visionaries multiply, and the boldest of them utter their vague predictions, and denounce the divine judgments against rulers and councils; their anticipations, when successful, obtaining for them the credit, in the eyes of the vulgar, of being anointed with the spirit of prophecy; and themselves, not unfrequently, becoming deceived by their own delusions.

PICART, in his laborious and splendid History of Religious Ceremonies, offers the following judicious reflection, under the article of Quakerism—"I observe, in this place, *en passant*, that political and religious revolutions are generally advantageous to fanaticism; and that we then find many more prophets and inspired persons, than at any other period. The revocation of the Edict of Nantz, the flight which followed it, and the Revolution of England, gave the spirit of prophecy to so great a number of refugees, at that period, that you saw and met with none but prophets and followers of prophets."†

In the times—under the circumstances—and from the operation of the causes which we have thus briefly alluded

* An allusion to the trade of Fox, as a shoemaker, would, we willingly allow, be misplaced; but we *may* be permitted to notice that vain love of peculiarity which should have induced the founder of Quakerism to perambulate the country in a *dress of leather*.

† Ceremonies et Costumes Religieuses de tous les Peuples du monde.—Tome iv. p. 145, Amsterdam,

to, originated **QUAKERISM**. We now proceed briefly to examine its principles.

The grand primordial principle of Quakerism is the doctrine of the **INWARD LIGHT**; in other words, the Quakers hold that all mankind are endowed with a certain portion of divine light and knowledge, which acts internally and independent of all outward impressions on the mind; which directs the actions, and becomes the means of salvation to all who give themselves up to its *leadings*:—this *divine light*, or *internal word*, is held by them to be superior in authority to the scriptures; it is, in fact, the *direct influence* of God himself acting upon and inspiring the natural powers of man. Without this *spirit*, or *light within*, it is held that men can neither understand the scriptures, nor obtain pardon and salvation.

It may be well, however, to exhibit this sentiment in the language and upon the representation of its advocates themselves; and first the *universality* of this divine light is thus expressed by Barclay. In propositions V. and VI., page 108 of his Apology, the following statement of the object of his two propositions appears—“*Concerning the UNIVERSAL redemption by Christ, and also the saving and SPIRITUAL LIGHT wherewith EVERY MAN IS ENLIGHTENED*;” and page 132, “That God who, out of his infinite love, sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world who tasted death for every man, hath given to EVERY MAN whether Jew or Gentile, Turk or Sythian, Indian or Barbarian, of whatsoever country or place, A CERTAIN DAY OR TIME OF VISITATION,” &c.; and “*for this end God hath communicated and given unto EVERY MAN a measure of the light of his own Son, a measure of grace, or a measure of the spirit.*” Among the modern writers of the Friends Henry Tuke, in his “*Principles of Religion as professed by the Society of Christians usually called Quakers; written for the instruction of their Youth, and for the information of Strangers,*” expressly states, that “*such a portion of the HOLY SPIRIT as is necessary for working out the soul’s salvation is afforded to mankind UNIVERSALLY,*” p. 58. And again, “*Thus we see, in every age and state of the world, there has been A SECRET PRINCIPLE at work in the minds of men, which formed the basis of all true religion,*” &c. p. 59.

The degree in which this Divine Light is supposed to operate on the minds of the faithful, as the sole means of religious knowledge, will appear from the following extracts from Barclay,

“ And, seeing the revelation of the Son is in and by the spirit, therefore, the TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT is that ALONE by which the true knowledge of God HATH BEEN, IS, and CAN BE ONLY REVEALED.” And again—*“ For this DIVINE REVELATION and INWARD ILLUMINATION is that which is evident and clear of itself; forcing, by its own evidence and clearness, the well-disposed understanding to assent; IRRESISTABLY MOVING the same thereunto, even as the common principles of natural truths do move and incline the mind to a natural assent: as, that the whole is greater than its part; that two contradictions can neither be both true nor both false.”*—Apology, page 19 and 20.

Further—*“ For the better understanding, then, of this proposition we do distinguish between the certain knowledge of God, and the uncertain; betwixt the spiritual knowledge and the literal; the saving-heart knowledge, and soaring airy-head knowledge. The last, we confess, may be divers ways obtained; but the first, by no other way than THE INWARD IMMEDIATE MANIFESTATION and REVELATION of GOD’S SPIRIT shining in and upon the heart, enlightening and opening the understanding.”*—Ibid, p. 20.

From amongst the modern writers of this sect Jesse Kersey may be selected as clearly expressing this same principle: *“ And first, the true knowledge of God, we believe, cannot be obtained by any OUTWARD MEANS. God is a spirit, and cannot be known but by a spiritual and DIVINE MANIFESTATION opening in the soul.”*—*A Treatise on Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion; in which are illustrated the Profession, &c. of the Society of Friends*, p. 7.

Let us pause for a moment, to reflect on the presumption and impiety of this principle, as above defined, and as believed and acted upon by the Society of Friends. Man, in his best state, is a weak and imperfect creature; and, even when under the influence of religious principle, is constantly liable to err, both in judgment and in practice. If, however, we are brought to persuade ourselves that our thoughts, judgments and actions are inspired and directed by the immediate operation of Omnipotence—that the knowledge that is within us is part and parcel of the Divine knowledge, *“ irresistably moving”* our minds, and shaping our course, we lose at once all sense of our imperfections; and feel ourselves, not as being weak, erring creatures, but infallible agencies: and what, in the absence of this pernicious hypothesis, would be regarded as folly, or as error, is now estimated as the manifestations of Divine wisdom

and power! This is the *necessary*—the *moral* tendency of the Quaker creed; and if it does not *now* produce all these effects in their full force, it is because the Quakers, as a body, are either ignorant of or indifferent to those dogmas, on which they were originally united;—because they have become, in fact, more a civil association than a religious body: but the truth is, that these effects—*all* these effects *were* produced on the early members of the sect as the lives and writings of the two Foxes, of Howgill, Burroughs, Fisher, Naylor, and indeed almost all who were exposed to the early and active excitement of Quaker principles, will sufficiently attest. We are aware that the Friends allow that, notwithstanding the operation of the spirit, men may resist its *drawings*, and that they continue to retain their moral agency. It is not for us to reconcile the inconsistency of the Quaker creed; but the question really is—*will* the believers in this Divine influence *feel* themselves to be free agents? *will* they—*can* they think and act like men who know themselves to be subject to those mistakes and infirmities which are the common lot of mortality, and a sense of which is the only safeguard against their frequent falling into actual error? This question becomes of the more serious importance, when it is considered that the pretended possessors of this spirit are themselves the judges of its existence and supposed operations; judges, indeed, in their own cause; and that, against their interested decisions, they admit no appeal to the courts of reason and of argument.

That the reader may, however, judge of the effects of this doctrine of the *inward light*—of the extravagance, the presumption, the pride, and the sinfulness to which it has led those of the people called Quakers, who are supposed to have been most under its influence, and who have been imbued with a double portion of this spirit—we shall present some extracts from the early history and writings of the Friends; premising, first of all, that, as our object is to institute a just and dispassionate inquiry into the principles and professions of the Quaker body, we shall, for that reason, refer to no disputed facts or doubtful authorities: we shall not cite instances of conduct which the Quakers themselves condemn, or attempt to make the whole body responsible for the acts of individuals running wild from the fold of Quakerism. The evidence upon which we shall try the Friends will be drawn from the conduct of the founders and ornaments of their church—the chief saints of their calendar. And if, when we have completed our evidence, we

shall have succeeded in making out, against the early teachers of this sect, a case of the grossest presumption and the most superlative folly, it can never be permitted to the modern Quakers to plead their disapproval of the proceedings and pretensions of their predecessors. We are not aware that they *will* do this, as they cannot but perceive that the first propagators of a system claiming to be divinely communicated, must be supposed the best acquainted with its principles, and to have acted the most in accordance with its spirit.

We shall first, then, present some specimens of the conduct and character of *George Fox*, the founder of the sect, in which we think the reader will hardly fail to perceive with how much justice we have described the principles of Quakerism as leading to the most revolting pride and self-importance.

Our first quotation will be from one of the written addresses of George Fox to the magistrates of Derby, in consequence of their having placed him in confinement. It will be found in Sewell's History of the Quakers. *

"Friends!—had you known *who sent me to you*, ye would have received me; *for the Lord sent me to you*—to warn you of the woes that are coming upon you, and to bid you look at the Lord, and not at man. But when I had told you my experience what *the Lord had done for me*, then your hearts were hardened, and you sent me to prison, where you have kept me many weeks. If the love of God had *broke your hearts*, then would ye see what ye have done: ye would not have imprisoned me, had not *my Father* suffered you; and by his power I shall be loosed, for he openeth and shutteth:—to him be all glory."

The address concludes—

"I do not write with hatred to you, but to keep my conscience clear.—*Take heed how you spend your time!*"—Sewell, p. 34.

From Fox's journal we extract a more marked evidence of his intolerable presumption and folly; combining in some measure, as they appear to us to do, the rude self-claimed importance of a COBBETT, with the cool, scornful, spiritual pride of a HUNTINGTON—

"Then came people from far and near to see me, and I was fearful of being drawn out by them; yet I was made to speak, and open things to them. There was one *Brown*, who had great *prophecies* and signs upon his death-bed of me; and he spake openly of what I should be made instrumental of the Lord to bring forth. And of others he spake that *they should*

* As we shall have frequent occasion to refer to this work, we may observe, that it is one of the earliest and most authentic histories of the Quaker sect; that it is highly esteemed by the Friends themselves; that its author was himself a Quaker, and that he labours to place the history of his sect in the most favourable point of view; not unfrequently, indeed, glossing over, or wholly omitting, in his extracts from the writers of the early Quakers, the most objectionable or extravagant of their ideas or their productions.

come to nothing, which was fulfilled on some that then were something in shew. And when this man was buried, *a great work of the Lord fell upon me*, to the admiration of many who thought I had been dead: and many came to see me for about fourteen days time; for I was very much altered in countenance and person, as if my body had been new moulded or changed. And while I was in that condition, *I had a sense and discerning given me by the Lord*—through which I saw plainly, that when many people talk of God and Christ, &c. the serpent spake in them.”——“And I saw into that which was *without end, and things which cannot be uttered*; and of the greatness and infiniteness of the love of God, which cannot be expressed by words.”—P. 13, folio edit., 1694.

Such are the effects—upon a fanatical mind, and a heated imagination—the inevitable effects of a belief in this inward light, and in the mental operation of this supernatural spirit!

From Fox's Select Epistles, &c. which form a ponderous volume of pride and fanaticism, not unfrequently verging on impiety, we extract the following:—

“When the Lord first sent me forth in the year 1643, I was sent as an innocent lamb (and young in years) amongst (men in the nature of) wolves, dogs, bears, lions and tigers, into the world, which *the devil* had made like a wilderness; no right way *then* found out in it. And I was sent to turn people from darkness to the light,” &c.—Page 1.

And again, page 6—“Concerning the first spreading the truth, and how that many were imprisoned,” &c.

“For I was sent for to many sick people; and, at one time, I was sent for to *White-Chappel*, about the third hour in the morning, to a woman that was dying, and her child, and the people was weeping about her. And, after a while, I was moved (*in the name and power of Jesus Christ*) to speak to the woman, and she and her child was raised up; and she got up, to the astonishment of the people, when they came in the morning, and her child also was healed.”*

But, perhaps, the strongest evidence of the spiritual intoxication of the founder of Quakerism, is to be found in a curious work which was written to explain and defend the Quaker practice of using the singular pronouns *thou* and *thee*, in preference to the plural *you*—a work entitled, “*A Battle-Dore for Teachers and Professors to learn singular and plural—YOU to MANY, and THOU to ONE*,”—the object is expressed to be, “*to shew how emperors and others have used the singular word to ONE—and how the word YOU to ONE came first from the Pope*.” It is written “by George Fox, John Stubbs, Benjamin Furley—1660.” We learn from Fox's Journal that this work was chiefly com-

* “A collection of many select and Christian Epistles, Letters, and Testimonies, written on sundry occasions by that ancient, eminent, faithful friend and minister of Jesus Christ, George Fox—1698, published by G. Whitehead,

posed by Stubbs and Furley (it being in fact a work of learning, to which Fox had no pretensions), but that some things were added by himself. It is in the introduction to this singular work that Fox makes the following modest declaration :—" *All languages are to me no more than dust, WHO WAS BEFORE ALL LANGUAGES WERE; and am com'd before languages were; and am redeemed out of languages into the power where men shall agree.*" It would be very amusing, if our subject would allow of it, to notice the criticisms that have been offered on this passage by some of the *literati* among the Friends, in order to soften down the presumption of the above assertions : some have even gone so far as to suggest two long *supplements* in the text of the *inspired penman*, and to justify such supplements by the example of the translators of our English Bibles ; forgetting that we have Fox in the *pure original* of our native tongue, whilst the scriptures are a translation from a dead to a modern language. But what objection have these fastidious critics to the above passage ? It is, after all, only *true orthodox* Quakerism, and with that view it has been quoted by us. Fox could only mean that the spirit of God, which was in him, and by which he was inspired, was *before all languages* ; and that, receiving communications in heavenly language, he disdained such as were earthly. This is very presumptuous indeed ; but that is the very point we contend for : we say that the Quaker, then as now, who acts upon and feels the principles of his sect, *must*, as a necessary consequence, *be* presumptuous. And, we willingly adopt the judgment of the reviewers, with regard to the Society of Friends :—" It is quite plain to us that " their founder, George Fox, was *exceedingly* insane ; and " though we by no means suspect many of his present " followers of the same malady, we cannot help saying that " their doctrines are a little too high-flown for our humble " apprehension."—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. 10, p. 101, *Clarkson's Portraiture*.

From Fox the greater we turn to Fox the less ; the latter being an approved and zealous minister among the early Quakers, and not less presumptuous, as it would seem, in the nature of his claims than the modest master-builder of the Quaker system. This Fox, when prisoner in Lambeth House, wrote a book entitled "*The dread of God's Power uttering its Voice, through Man, unto the heads of the Nation.*"

" Herein" (says Sewell) " he exhorted the rulers very earnestly to do justice ; and said, among the rest, ' Friends, I must deal plainly with you in the sight of God, who hath made me a prophet to the nation, I may not

flatter any of you. My life is in the hand of my Maker, and not one hair of my head can fall to the ground without his providence. He hath redeemed my soul from hell, and my mind from the earth, and he hath *given me his good spirit* to lead me. I am henceforth no more my own, but I am the Lord's, who hath formed me to his praise, and hath *brought me forth that I may sound forth his powerful truth amongst the people.*"—p. 287.

The next of the Quaker worthies to whom we shall refer—the next instance of the natural effect of a belief in the inward light, which we shall adduce—is *William Dewsbury*. He had been originally a shepherd; afterwards became a soldier, and finally a Quaker! in which profession he was, observes Sewell, "a very zealous teacher, and an eminent instrument to the conversion of many." (p. 617.) When taken before Judge Atkins, at Wellingborough, in the year 1655, during an examination touching his principles, the following dialogue occurred:—

"The next query of the Judge was, '*What is thy name?*' and the answer was, '*Unknown to the world.*' 'Let us hear (said the Judge) what that name is that the world knows not.' 'It is (quoth Dewsbury) *known in the light*, and none can know it, but he that hath it; but the name *the world knows me by is*, William Dewsbury.' Then said the Judge 'What countryman art thou?' and Dewsbury answered, 'Of the land *Canaan.*' 'That's far off,' replied the Judge. 'Nay (said Dewsbury) for *all that dwell in God* are in the Holy City, New Jerusalem, which comes down from heaven, where the soul is in rest and enjoys the love of God in Jesus Christ, in whom the union is with the Father of Light.'"—Sewell, p. 119, 120.

How different, as compared with the conduct of this fanatic, is that of the apostle Paul when brought before rulers and magistrates for the testimony of the gospel. Paul is respectful in his manner, clear and dignified in his defence; he never insults those in authority by playing upon words, or seeks to stultify his judges by the adoption of a confused, unintelligible jargon. Equally different also is Paul's account of his miraculous conversion to that of one *Marmaduke Stephenson*, who is reported to have been one of the first Quaker martyrs on American ground. Take the following account, as given forth by *Stephenson* himself, when a prisoner at Boston (America, 1659). It commences in the following manner:—

"In the beginning of the year 1655, I was at the plough in the east parts of Yorkshire, in old England, near the place, where *my outward being was*;"*

* It does not exactly appear, whether the *outward being* of the worthy Quaker was *in* the place where he really was, or only near it. If we were blessed with the inward light, we suppose we should see this matter more clearly.

and, as I walked after the plough, I was filled with the love and the *presence of the living God*, which did ravish my heart when I felt it; for it did increase and abound in me like a living stream, *so did the love and life of God run through me like precious ointment giving a pleasant smell*, which made me to stand still; and as I stood a little still with my heart and mind stayed on the Lord, the word of the Lord came to me in a small still voice, WHICH I DID HEAR PERFECTLY, saying to me in the secret of my heart and conscience, 'I HAVE ORDAINED THEE A PROPHET UNTO THE NATIONS.'—And at the hearing the word of the Lord I was put to a stand, seeing that I was but a child for such a weighty matter. So, at the time appointed, BARBADOES was set before me, unto which I was required of the Lord to go, and leave my dear loving wife and tender children. For the Lord said unto me, *immediately by his spirit*, that he would be *as a husband to my wife and as a father to my children*, and they should not want in my absence, for he would provide for them when I was gone."—Sewell, p. 228. 229.

Edward Burroughs appears to have been another finished representative of the *inward light*. He is known as the author of a folio volume of letters, exhortations, prophecies, threatnings, curses, and consolations, given forth at sundry times and in divers manners. This man was denominated by the Quakers '*A son of thunder*;' and he appears indeed, from the following narration, to have been at least a spiritual pugilist.

"At London there is a custom in summer time, when the evening approaches and tradesmen leave off working, that many lusty fellows meet in the fields to try their skill and strength in wrestling, where generally a multitude of people stands gazing in a round. Now, it so fell out that E. Burroughs past by the place where they were wrestling, and standing still among the spectators, saw how a strong and dextrous fellow had already thrown three others and was waiting for a fourth champion, if any durst venture, to enter the lists. At length, none being bold enough to try, E. Burroughs stepped into the ring, commonly made up of *all sorts of people*: And, having looked upon the wrestler with a serious countenance, the man was not a little surprised, instead of an airy antagonist, to meet with a *grave and awful young man*; and all stood as it were amazed at this sight, eagerly expecting what would be the issue of this combat. But it was quite another *fight* E. Burroughs aimed at." Sewell then goes on to relate, that this spiritual combatant proceeded to address the spectators "with such a *heart-piercing power*, that he was heard by *this mixt multitude* with no less attention than admiration!!" P. 81.

To refer, in this instance, to the judicious advice of Jesus, "*Cast not thy pearl before swine*," would be to pay an undeserved compliment to the *heavenly garbage*, the spiritual '*pigs meat*,' on which it may be supposed that Burroughs feasted "*the ring commonly made up of all sorts of people*." We proceed, therefore, to notice a book of Judgments, published by this Burroughs, which the Quaker historian Sewell, omits to mention. It was ushered into the world under the following assuming, not to say blasphemous

announcement ; which, as another instance of the effect and operation of a belief in the inward light, we extract from the folio edition of his works (1672.)

“ A trumpet of the Lord sounded forth in *Sion*, &c. or fearful voices of terrible thunders uttered forth from the throne to the astonishment of the heathen in all quarters of the earth, who are not sealed in the forehead, &c. declared and written by a son of thunder, as a warning to all the inhabitants of the earth, where the great image is standing, or any part of it is worshipped, &c. with a salutation to the seed who are gathered into the fold, and with the children of the King, &c. by order of the Lord, and authority given unto me, by the spirit of the living God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: the one-and-thirtieth day of the tenth moneth, in the year of the world's account, 1655, about the fourth hour in the morning, when my meditations were on my God, upon my bed in *Kilkenny Castle* in the nation of Ireland : at that time the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, write my controverſie with all the inhabitants of the earth. Given under my hand, and sealed with the spirit of the eternal God who lives for ever, through a servant of the Lord, E. Burroughs.”

Now, as it frequently happens when the blasphemies of the Quaker worthies are pointed out, that the writers on the side of Quakerism abandon their defence, under the plea that such individuals were not approved by the Quakers themselves ; we shall produce certain ‘ *testimonies* ’ in favour of this E. Burroughs to shew, that *he*, the writer of the above, and other similar blasphemies, was an approved minister amongst them. In the introduction to the collection of his works, entitled “ *The memorable works of a Son of Thunder and consolation ; namely, that true prophet and faithful servant of the Lord, and sufferer for the testimony of Jesus, E. Burroughs.* ” 1672. There are several “ *testimonies* ” in favour of this man from Quakers of pious memory, from amongst which we select the following :—

“ A testimony of *George Fox* concerning E. Burroughs.—His name is chronicled in the lambs’ book of life, a righteous plant, pure, chaste, clean ; a valiant warrior, more than a conqueror, who hath got the crown through death and sufferings, who is dead, but yet liveth amongst us ; and amongst us is alive.—G. Fox.”

We have also Frances Howgill’s testimony concerning Edward Burroughs, “ that worthy prophet of the Lord.”

“ Shall days, or months, or years, (he asks) wear out thy name as though thou hadst had no being ? O nay ! Shall not thy noble and valiant acts, and mighty works, which thou hast wrought through the power of him that separated thee from the womb, live in generations to come ? O yes ! The children that are yet unborn shall have thee in their mouths, and thy works shall testify of thee in generations who yet have no being, and shall count

thee blessed. Did thy life go out as the *smuff* of a candle? O nay! Thou hast penetrated the hearts of many, and the memorial of the just shall live for ever, and be in renown among the children of wisdom for ever, &c."*

Many other instances of extravagance and folly, more gross than any yet enumerated, might readily be selected from the history of the Friends; but in some of these, we are aware, that we should be immediately met by the assertion, that the friends themselves disapprove of the conduct of some of the individuals who figure in their history, and were united with their body. Such, for in-

* That the posthumous honours of Burroughs may not suffer in our hands, it may be necessary to notify to the reader, that he was not only a *prophet* but a *poet*. . . Isaiah and other of the Hebrew prophets have, as is sufficiently known, delivered some portions of their writings in poetry, which for sublimity of thought, and force and beauty of expression, deservedly command our admiration. With this observation, we will introduce a specimen of Burroughs' *inspired* poetry, which we extract from a long poem, constructed by him as an introduction to Fox's book, entitled "*The great mystery of the great whore unfolded.*" 1659.

" The antichrist who hath put on and cover'd with sheep's cloathing,
And long rul'd kings, on notions inwardly ravening;
Who hath devour'd God's heritage, and had a kingdom great,
I have seen him made war against, and truth gave him defeat.
Behold the whore—her flesh is burnt, her beauty doth now fall,
She that is all harlots' great mother, whose daughters are whores all.
Behold the city great, who once made nations rich and high,
She's fall'n to the ground and burnt, and none more profit her by.
Behold the antichrist once great, her kingdom is subduing,
The Lord alone for ever will rule, his son's kingdom is coming;
And the woman that long hath fled into that place of mourning;
And rested in the wilderness, she is again returning;
And her seed is again springing and shall replenish nations,
And the man child must come to rule for ever thro' gen'rations.
And when this is all come to pass, O then rejoice and sing
Ye prophets and apostles all, and heavenly children!
When God hath you avenged upon your enemies all,
Then is the day of praises, for saints both great and small."

We confess this does not read like *inspiration*; and yet so careful is the collector of the remains of Burroughs in preserving whatever records of his genius or his inspiration were worthy of going down to posterity, that on turning to the volume of his works, which was collected and published after his death, we find the above divine composition inserted, with the following note by the Editor.

" This epistle was, by E. B., prefixed to a book of G. Fox's published in the year 1659; which, though some of it related to that book, yet, it being *E. B.'s epistle*, and much of it of *a more general concernment*, it was judged meet to be here inserted and published with the rest."

FRANCIS HOWGILL, the author of the last quoted *testimony*, was, it may be necessary to observe, a man of good report among the Quakers, and greatly

stance, would be the case with regard to the well-known instance of *James Naylor*, whose horrible blasphemy reached to such a pitch, that he received from many of the Quakers the titles and appellations which belong to God himself; and his female followers, when he was in prison at Exeter, actually *kneeled* before him and *kissed his feet*. It does not at all satisfy us to be told, that the more prudent Quakers, even in his own days, condemned his conduct and that of his followers; for the question, as far as our present inquiry is concerned, simply is, whether their extravagance was not the natural effect and legitimate offspring of their own doctrine of the *inward light*? It was, as we conceive, in admirable keeping with the Quaker creed, that *Naylor*, when asked, during his examination before Parliament, "why he suffered those women to worship and adore him?" coolly replied, that "bowing to the creature he denied, but if they beheld the *power of Christ wherever it was*, and bowed to it, he had nothing by which he might resist that, or gainsay it." Sewell, whilst he condemns the conduct of *Naylor*, seeks at the same time to extenuate it, by observing that, during these transactions, "*his understanding was under a cloud*;" now, this is exactly what we think, only that we say it was a cloud arising from the mists of Quakerism. This is, indeed, the very thing which we are concerned to establish; and we think, that the evidence already presented, ought to convince even the Quakers themselves, that "*all their fathers were under the cloud*," only impending, perhaps, though of that we should feel some doubt, more densely over the heads of *Naylor* and his companions.

Another brief instance of the effects of the Quaker principles—in which it will be difficult to determine which ought the most to command our admiration, the folly or the assurance

influenced by the inward light; by which, indeed, he was prompted to go to court to lecture the Protector, and subsequently to annoy him with several prophetic letters. His works were, after his death, collected by the faithful in a folio volume; in the introduction to which, we find—"Thomas Langhorn's and Thomas Carlton's *testimony* concerning Francis Howgill." In this testimony, the two Thomas's have enshrined in verse the virtues of their saint.

"God's everlasting gospel he did preach,
His witness pure in many he did reach;
A prating, scribbling Quaker they him call'd,
Because he did confound their wise men all.
The work this man hath wrought with others moe,
Ages and years to come the effect will show."

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it evinces—we present from *Picart*, (Tome iv. p. 144, 145) who relates, that during the war which followed the English revolution, a Quakeress, named *Esther Bidley*, went on a mission from God to exhort to peace the powers which were at war. She addressed herself first to the Queen of England, (Ann) by whom she was kindly received; she then proceeded to France, and, by means of James the II., obtained an interview with the Duke of Orleans, whom she desired to introduce her to the King (Louis XIV.); upon her request being refused by the Duke, the Quakeress exclaimed, “*I converse every day with the Monarch of Monarchs, and it is not permitted to me to speak for a moment to the King of a single nation!*”

It may possibly be objected, that we have noticed chiefly the unlearned teachers of the Quaker principles—*unlearned* indeed! So then we must admit, that the SPIRIT OF GOD, by which these teachers are supposed to have spoken and to have written, requires the aid of human learning to prevent its manifestations from appearing ridiculous! But we are by no means certain, that even the learned and, as he is generally considered, the amiable Penn, was wholly free from that pride and presumption which is, as we maintain, of the very essence of the Quaker principles. His overbearing manners and virtuperative language to his opponents, proceeded less, we would fain believe, from an unfeeling heart, than from a head intoxicated with the fumes of spiritual pride. His old friend, Mr. Fermin, he denominated “*a winding sheet*,” “*that little, great, pragmatistical Thomas Fermin—a monster, all tongue and no ears*.” Mr. Hedworth, he called “*a very night-bird—a wanderer—one that looks and creeps about like an angry, vagrant Momus—burstened with folly and revenge—stuffed with dull ignorance and cavils—shallow head—envious heart!*” In his Pamphlet, entitled “*The Spirit of Alexander the Coppersmith*,” he calls Mr. Mucklow, “*an old cankered apostate, a very mutineer in religion, a dark, envious, inveterate man—an admantine Alexander the apostate.*”* Bishop Burnet, who was personally acquainted with Penn, describes him as “*a talking, vain man, who had been long in the king’s favour, he being the vice admiral’s son. He had such an opinion of his own faculty of persuasion, that he thought none could stand before it, though he was singular in that opinion; for he had a tedious, luscious way that was not apt to overcome a man’s reason, though it might tire his patience.*”—

* See this and much more, as stated in “the true picture of Quakerism,” 1736.

(*History of his own times*, folio edition, vol. 2, p. 693, 1724.) This judgment of Burnett concerning Penn is, we confess, in our minds, greatly confirmed by the letters which passed between him and Baxter; and which have been only recently presented to the public, being published from the original MSS. in Dr. Williams' library.* One of these letters [date 1675] opens in the following terms, "I have received a long letter from thee, which I shall answer with what brevity I can. The first part of it contains an evasion of meeting; the last a repetition of thy old refuted clamours; and both wrapped up in terms *only fit for the devil*; such is the sweetness of thy nature, and the great charity of thy new modelled religion." Richard Baxter's letter, to which the above is a reply, by no means deserves the epithet by which it is characterised; it is written, indeed, with some peevishness, but Baxter was at the time an invalid, and the poor man had the day before been exposed to a *seven hours* debate with Penn! In another of these letters, Penn makes use of the following gentle language: "For thy senseless, headless, tailless talk, I profess I am more than ashamed, for I was grieved. Has my last *kind* letter had no better success? I perceive the scurvy of the mind is thy distemper; I fear it is incurable." The Editor of the *Monthly Repository* offers an apology for the asperity with which this correspondence was conducted; he intimates that some allowance should be made for the times in which these letters were written, for that "both these good men were infected with the polemical temper of the age." This, certainly, may be an apology for Baxter, but it can prove none for Penn. Penn wrote by the spirit of God.—Penn's thoughts were dictated by the *inward light*.—What, then! is the spirit of God "infected with the polemical temper of the age?" We admit, indeed, with the Editor, that "improvement in knowledge has softened the asperity of theological controversy;" but the question is—has improvement in knowledge softened the asperity of the spirit of God? Is the divine wisdom debased or improved, according to the ignorance or intelligence of the age in which it is manifested. We put then this *query* to the serious consideration of every sincere member of the Society of Friends—are you not compelled to charge all the folly, the presumption, the

* See *Monthly Repository* for March and April 1823.

impiety, which we have proved to be so common among the early members of your sect, upon the spirit of God, or to admit the very case which we are endeavouring to establish, that such folly, presumption, and impiety have been engendered by, and are the natural consequence of, that pernicious and intoxicating principle which ascribes the thoughts and actions of man to the immediate and supernatural agency of the Most High?

What then is the point to which we have now arrived? We say, that the belief in the inward light, and the dependance on a *constant revelation* to, and *miraculous influence* exerted on, the heart of man, as defined and believed in by the Quakers, have a most pernicious tendency; that they are calculated, when encouraged, to produce pride and extravagance and fanaticism, in an extreme degree. We have proved abundantly, and could, if challenged to the task, fill a volume with similar evidence, that such qualities have been prolific amongst this sect. For this effect then, we are compelled to seek a cause. If the cause we have assigned be not one applicable to the case, or adequate to produce the effect, it will be for the parties themselves to adduce a cause more appropriate and fully sufficient. It is evident, indeed, that, from an ignorance of scripture language, and a fatal and much-to-be-lamented misunderstanding of the simple doctrines of the gospel, many other sects of religious professors have, more or less, participated with the Quakers in the doctrine of the continued influence of the Holy Spirit; we admit thus much, but at the same time we must observe, that the pernicious effects upon such sects have accordingly been similar in kind, if not equal in degree, with those which we have seen to follow in the Quaker body. With each and all, however, who assume the possession of this inward influence, we avow ourselves at issue; but chiefly with the Quakers, because, of their system, it forms the chief and leading feature. We are aware, that in favour of the continued influence of the Holy Spirit, a reference is made to scripture authority; but, without entering on an obtruse, textual inquiry, we profess our belief, that the scriptures, so far from favouring such an influence as existing in the present day, or in any age after that of the apostles, are decisively against it. Nor is it a little remarkable to observe the confusion which prevails in the argument by which the Quaker writers maintain the affirmative of this question; for they refer us, generally, as evidence in favour of their hypothesis, to the

extraordinary powers which the scriptures declare to have been given to the chosen prophets of God ; to the out-pouring of the miraculous spirit in the days of Jesus and his apostles ; and to the *special* gifts which were granted in the primitive age to the church ; whereas *their* statement of the case is, that man, *as man*, necessarily receives a portion of this divine influence—that it is naturally possessed *by all*—believers or unbelievers, Christians or Heathens. This view of the subject, therefore, not only derives no support from the evidence by which the *special* gifts of the spirit are maintained, but is, in fact, irreconcilable with it ; and, inasmuch as it supercedes its necessity, so it tends directly to impeach its truth. If, however, we are held to the case of the prophets, apostles, and evangelists of scripture history, the Friends will, of course, not object to our drawing, at the same time, a comparison between the lives and writings and discourses of such scripture characters, and those of the prophets and apostles and evangelists of *their* church. Let then the reader, for his own satisfaction, compare the prophecy of Isaiah with the predictions of Burrough—the Psalms of David with the doggrels of Evans—the Acts of the Apostles with the Journal of Fox—the Epistles of Paul with the Letters of Howgill. These—all of these—in the judgment of the Quaker, were influenced and guided by the *inward light*, the *spirit of God* ; and yet, the causes being supposed the same, the discrepancy in the effects will be found to be as great, as, on their hypothesis, it is unaccountable. Nor let it be pleaded in behalf of the early Quakers, that they appeared and wrote in a dark and ignorant age, for, not to repeat what we have already said on this subject, assuredly the age was not *more* dark and ignorant than that in which the apostles entered on their mission. Surrounded by the mists of rabbinical traditions, and immersed in the thick darkness of Heathen superstitions, they, by the simplicity and power of their teaching, held forth the torch of divine truth, as “ a light shining out of a dark place.” The Quaker apostles, however, appear only to have increased the gloom of *their* age, and by their mysterious uncertain *light*, rather to have rendered “ *darkness visible*.” It is true, indeed, that according to the hypothesis of the Friends, the spirit, thus given to all, is given to different individuals in different proportions ; but this remark will avail them little ; for, upon the principles and statements of the Friends, it would appear that they claim *for themselves* the possession of this spirit, not in a less, but, on the contrary, in a much higher de-

gree, and to a far greater extent, than ever the apostles and inspired men of old pretended to. The apostles, it is true, were endowed with the spirit of power, which enabled them to work miracles in attestation of their mission, and as a sign, in those ages, to unbelievers: this extraordinary power directed them also in cases of difficulty connected with their mission, to which the unassisted judgment of the mind had proved incompetent; but, the apostles did *not* profess to speak and write and act in the performance of the general duties of their ministry, under the impulse of the divine spirit. Paul, indeed, expressly, on one occasion, distinguishes, when offering his advice, that he had received "*no commandment of the Lord*" upon the point under inquiry; but that he gave only his "*judgment*." (1 Cor. vii. 25, 26.) An avowal so pretentious as this, is not to be found in all the writings of Fox! *

* Revelation being in its own nature a miraculous communication, its doctrines were evidenced to the world by miraculous means; hence, the reason and necessity of the *gifts of the spirit* at the first establishment of Christianity, by means of which the first teachers of, and converts to, that system, were enabled to exhibit such extraordinary powers, as were calculated to prove to the world, that God was with them. The continuance of these powers or gifts of the spirit to the present age, would have defeated the end for which they were given, as their continued recurrence would cease to excite attention, and would necessarily be resolved into the ordinary operations of nature; they were given, therefore, only for a season and for an object, and when that season had arrived and that object was obtained, these gifts of the spirit were withdrawn agreeably to the express declaration of the apostle. (1 Cor. xiii. 8.) "*But, whether there be prophecies they shall fail, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away.*" Addressed, as were the writings of the New Testament, to the church, in an age when these gifts existed, frequent reference would necessarily be made to their use, their operation, and importance—such reference being, of course, intended for that age only; but the Quakers participating in the common error of supposing these scriptures were written for, and addressed to posterity, naturally apply the greater portion of such references to themselves. This delusion is, in some measure, aided by construing, in a mystical manner, various passages of scripture, in which the term *spirit* occurs, as expressive merely of the *mind* or *disposition* of the Christian, or the *spirit* and *genius* of the gospel. The doctrines of the gospel are also frequently and appropriately represented by the figure of *light*, and the same similitude is applied to Jesus, as the teacher of those doctrines. Thus he is called, (John i. 8.) "*The true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;*" but translate, as it should be translated, the term *world*, as *age* or *dispensation*, and this passage expresses, that—all who come into the Christian dispensation, are *enlightened* (instructed) by Jesus—by the doctrines, the motives and hopes, he has set before his church. It is needless to say, that this and similar passages are mistakenly applied by the Friends, as evidence of the doctrine of the *inward light*, which *light*, if it exist in the manner defined and maintained by them, must render all the doctrines of the gospel as at best but *useless*, to those who possess this higher guide of action!

Without attempting to anticipate the judgment of the reader upon the case now presented, we confess, for ourselves, that rising, as we have done, from a perusal of the Quaker history, we want words wherewith to express our sense of the folly and presumption of *such* a people, pretending to a peculiar divine illumination! And what, even *now*—notwithstanding their acknowledged mental improvement—what *now* are these modern *illuminati*? We speak it from an honest conviction, and with no intention to give pain to a single member of the sect, that in our judgment, upon all subjects connected with religion, they are less informed, less clear in their views, and consecutive in their reasonings, than any other class of the religious public. Why do we offer this reflection, but that it is in strict connection with the leading principle of their profession? for, “*where much is given, much shall be required.*” Here is a sect possessed, as they tell us, in a peculiar degree, with the spirit of God; that spirit becoming their guide—their monitor—their instructor—inspiring their thoughts, and speaking in their voices; and, what are the effects?—Reader, hast thou ever been present at a Quaker *meeting for worship*?—If not, then go thither for thine own *convincement*! It may not, however, be unprofitable, instead of endeavouring at the task ourselves, to give a sketch of one such meeting, as drawn by a masterly hand. Voltaire, it seems, attracted by the singularity of the Quaker sect, visited, when in England, one of their distinguished members, with the view of obtaining information concerning their tenets and professions. The lively picture which he presents of Quakerism in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, professes to be drawn up from the information then derived from his Quaker friend, Andrew Pitt, and from his own observations upon the body. Voltaire, we readily allow is, upon all religious subjects, a very questionable authority; at the same time, we may observe, that his testimony, in this instance, is not that of an enemy, as his writings abound in eulogiums on the Quaker sect, whose simplicity, morality, and love of peace, he takes occasion frequently to contrast with the pretensions and conduct of other Christian professors.

“Such was the substance (*à peu près*) of the conversation which I had with this singular man; but I was greatly astonished when, on the following Sunday, he took me to the church of the Quakers. They have several chapels in London, that to which I went, is near to their famous pillar, called the Monument. They were already assembled, when I entered with my guide; there were about four hundred men, and three hundred women in the place. The faces of the women were concealed; the men were

covered with their large hats ; all were seated—all in profound silence. I passed through the middle of them, without any one lifting up his eyes towards me. This silence continued for a quarter of an hour ; at length one of them arose, took off his hat, and after some sighs—he uttered partly with the mouth and partly with the nose, a wire-drawn bombast about his belief of the gospel, of which, neither himself, nor any one else, understood any thing. When this maker of wry faces had finished his fine soliloquy, and the company had separated quite edified and quite stupid, I inquired of my companion, why the more sober ones amongst them permitted such folly ? We are compelled to tolerate it, said he, because we cannot know, whether a man who gets up to speak, will be inspired by the spirit, or by nonsense (*folie*). In this state of doubt we listen patiently ; we suffer even our women to speak ; two or three of our devout ones frequently find themselves inspired at the same time, and then a fine uproar is made in the house of the Lord !!*

Upon the reasons which induce the Friends, not unfrequently, to submit to the nonsense that is talked at their meetings, we apprehend, Voltaire must have misunderstood his Quaker informant ; as the following fact will evince, that they *can* foresee when a speaker will be moved by the spirit. We allude to a practice not uncommon amongst them, that of sending round hand bills, on the arrival, from a distance, of any highly-gifted speaker or minister, to collect their neighbours, to hear his discourse ; and it is found that, at the day, and hour, and place named, *the spirit moves accordingly*. This, certainly, would appear to militate against the supposition, that the Friends do not know before hand, whether a teacher will be moved by the spirit ; although it is certain that there are several rules observed by the society of Friends, with regard to the choice and approbation of those who are blessed with what is termed by them "*the outward testimony*," which would seem to proceed upon an uncertainty as to the operation of the spirit on the oral powers of their speakers. We profess, indeed, not to understand these difficulties, they involve contradictions, which *our spirit* does not enable us to solve ; but, shall conclude this article with another *testimony*, with regard to the intellectual standard of modern Quakerism, from no less a pen than that of SOUTHEY, the present Poet Laureat. Let

* *Dictionnaire Philosophique de Voltaire*, Tome 7. Not having any English translation of the above, we have felt it proper to adhere, in our translation, as closely as possible to the original, to which scrupulosity on our part, the spirit and happiness of the original is, in some measure, sacrificed. We would also observe, that there is a note to the above article, by the Editors, in which they say, that "Andrew Pitt wrote afterwards to the "Author to complain of his having added *a little* to the truth ; and to assure "him, that God was offended at his having jested at the Quakers."

us see what, according to this writer, the inward light—the supposed peculiar possession of the spirit of God, has made this people.

“ Their preaching strikes a stranger as ludicrous. You may conceive what it must needs be, when the preacher imagines himself to be the organ of inspiration; and instead of thinking what he should say, watches for what he believes to be internally dictated to him. Nothing, in fact, can be more incoherent than their discourses; and their manifest inferiority, to those of any other sect, ought to convince them of the fallacy of the opinion upon which they proceed. It is not, however, the matter of these discourses which impresses those who are disposed to be impressed; knowing the speaker to be seriously affected, they partake his feelings, and become seriously affected also. Their history affords a curious illustration of this: the mother of their chronicler was a Dutch woman, who being moved, as she believed, by the spirit, came to preach in England in the days of her persecution. She understood no English, and, therefore, delivered herself through an interpreter. One day it happened that the interpreter was not at hand when the call came upon her; and the person who attempted to translate her meaning, found that he could not understand her. The congregation, however, called upon her to proceed, affirming, that the RELIGIOUS FEELING WHICH SHE IMPRESSED UPON THEM, COULD NOT BE STRONGER IF THEY HAD UNDERSTOOD HER!”—*Espriella's Letters*, vol. 3, p. 92, 93.

In measuring the extent of fanaticism and folly which, from sources of undoubted authority, we have already adduced against the early Quakers, among whom, because they were the founders of the body, we ought to expect to find the sublime conceptions of the sect, even in higher purity than in our own days; the reader must keep constantly in mind, that these are the records of a body professing to be moved by the *spirit of God*, and to dwell in the *light of God*; the advantages of which are thus expressed by the founder of the sect in question? “ But, *dwelling in the light*, all sects and “ all opinions and religions are *discovered*, and stand naked “ before the Lord, and *before all who are of God*, and are “ seen with the *eternal eye*!” And again, “ Dwelling in the “ *light there's no occasion at all for stumbling*, FOR ALL THINGS “ ARE DISCOVERED WITH THE LIGHT. Thou that lovest it— “ here's thy teacher, when thou art walking abroad, it is “ present with thee, in thy bosom; thou need'st not say *lo* “ *here!* or *lo there!* And, as thou liest in thy bed, 'tis “ present to teach thee and judge thy wandering mind, which “ would wander abroad.”—*Fox's Doctrinals*, p. 2 and 3. folio edition. The proficiency of the early and most apt scholars of this *teacher* is now before the reader; and, in our next, it will be our endeavour to prove, that its teaching has a direct tendency to UNDERMINE THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND TO SUPERSEDE THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL.

NOTICES.

PROSECUTION FOR LIBEL.

Soon after the publication of the article on Dissenters' Marriages, in our last Register, some rumours reached us of a meeting having been held, with reference thereto, by certain of the clergy of the diocese of London. We have not heard, whether the object of this meeting was to obtain the consent of THE CHURCH, in favour of the claim which the article in question seeks to establish in behalf of dissenters, as the only step, with the knowledge of which we are favoured, is, that one of the Reverend Gentlemen, reported to be a party to such meeting, has served our printer, together with the author of the above article, with notice of ACTION FOR LIBEL. When the reader is informed that this Reverend Gentleman is none other than Mr. RICE, the St. Luke's Curate, (whose violent, unfeeling, and as we maintain, ILLEGAL conduct, is noticed in the above article) it will hardly be supposed, that the clergy of London would commit themselves to the support of a person who proceeded to obviate the conscientious scruples of our friends, with regard to the marriage ceremony, by SENDING FOR A CONSTABLE, instead of obeying the precept of that religion he professes to teach;—"the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach—PATIENT—IN MEENESS INSTRUCTING THOSE THAT OPPOSE THEMSELVES."

We confess, therefore, that we are greatly in the dark as to the origin and object of this prosecution. Is it to be regarded as the offspring of that personal malevolence, which can never forgive those whom it has first injured? Is it an essay made by a needy individual upon the pockets of the printer and author of the article in question? Or, is the reverend plaintiff led into court by the advice of some eager and inexperienced practitioner? We observe, not indeed without pain, that the solicitor in this case is the son of a gentleman, who has long been the recognized and successful advocate of the *civil rights of dissenters*!—Has then the young gentleman left his '*father's house*' in quest of *church patronage*; and does he seek, at the expence of the dissenters' cause, to do some happy deed in favour of the establishment which, by washing out the sin of liberal principles "attaching to his family," shall gild 'his humble name'? As the name of the writer of the article on *Dissenters' Marriages* was promptly given up to the reverend and pious prosecutor in this cause, it was concluded, as a matter of course, that the printer would be relieved from all further trouble. In this, however, we had miscalculated the liberality, or rather the sense of justice, of our opponent, for we were speedily given to understand that, even for the printer there was no mercy, unless he would consent to publish to the world his belief, that Mr. Rice was "A HIGHLY RESPECTABLE Clergyman of the Church of England; and, therefore, wholly incapable of violating the canons of the church, or of so degrading himself and his profession, as to resort to any ale-house, or engage in any unlawful games." Now, as the printer knew positively nothing of Mr. Rice's "*respectability*," it could hardly have been expected that he should give the Reverend Gentleman a character; and as he had really never published it to the world that Mr. Rice *did* resort to any ale-house, or that he *did* engage in any unlawful games, it was too much to require him to declare that he did

not do so; *the mere* *us*, as such a denial in the *terms required*, would, by implication, have been a gross *libel* on many respectable clergymen of the Church of England, who, it is notorious, *do* violate the canons of the church, by resorting to alehouses and engaging in unlawful games; a fact, which the author of the article on Dissenters' Marriages will, as he informs us, be able, when on his defense, to prove from the lips of some very respectable clerical witnesses, whom he has instructed his solicitors to subpoena for that purpose. Thus, then, it will be seen, that from a too favourable estimate of the character and feelings of the prosecutor, he has now two defendants, the printer and author, on whom to empty the vials of his wrath.

Upon learning from the Reverend Gentleman's solicitor that the action in question was for a *false and malicious libel*, an immediate opportunity was offered to him of contradicting, in the *present* number of our Register, any statement he might deem to be false, the author pledging himself to obtain the insertion of any such contradiction, if signed by himself; this offer *he has declined to comply with*, thereby preferring, as it should seem, to remain under the opprobrium which he affects to believe has been cast upon him.

Upon turning to the report of the affair in which Mr. Rice was concerned, as stated in our last, it will be seen that our first acquaintance with that Gentleman was much against our will; but, as he is determined to force a closer intimacy upon us, we have latterly lost no time in cultivating a better knowledge of the Reverend Gentleman. To such of his respectable parishioners as have kindly assisted us in our inquiries, our best thanks are due; and as the object of their worthy pastor in this prosecution must be, either on the one hand, to seek the "*punishment*" of his supposed enemies, which would be contrary to the commands of that Master whose servant he professes to be, or on the other, to do *justice to his own character*; we avow ourselves at all times willing to join in this latter object, and our friend the author, together with the counsel for our printer, may, perchance, exhibit to an admiring jury, some pregnant proofs of that "*purity of clerical character*" which the solicitor for the prosecution so properly claims for his client.

DISSENTERS' MARRIAGES.—Our intention of giving a correct report of the debate in the House of Lords, on the Marquis of Lansdown's late motion for granting relief to dissenters from the marriage ceremony, has been, in a great measure, superseded by the report drawn up by Mr. Edgar Taylor, the solicitor to the Unitarian Association, and published by Fox, Threadneedle Street; which we recommend the perusal of to the reader. We shall, however, revive the subject when the parliament is again assembled.

CLERICAL ANECDOTES are at all times acceptable to us, and can scarcely be more so than at the present moment; we are, therefore, obliged to the parties who have furnished us with the information concerning a modern parish priest, who has suffered his *tavern bill* for expenses, incurred in an unsuccessful electioneering contest for a situation in the church, to remain unsettled, against whom an accusation has been exhibited at one of our Police offices for *profane swearing*; and who committed a *violent assault* on one of his respectable parishioners by striking him in the public street. Some of the other points noticed we were previously aware of, and with regard to the facts further promised, though we agree that there is ample time, yet as they may afford the clue to other inquiries of our own, they cannot be too speedily forwarded; with the latter view our correspondent will understand, that no particular

can be too minute. The hand-bills, if any of them are of a nature to be useful, but particularly the *dialogue*, attributed to the *Young Lawyer*, we shall be glad to receive. The party alluded to as possessing the means of rendering us most essential service, proves to be an old acquaintance, and is *quite with us*.

THE UNITARIAN TEACHERS.—Our last number, in the article on *Religious Worship*, p. 194, contained, it will be remembered, an account of the efforts which we had made, hitherto without success, to induce the leaders of the Unitarian body to discuss with us the propriety of certain of their public forms and practices, (as pulpit preaching, social prayer, &c.) which we deemed unscriptural and anti-christian. This was followed in that article by a fresh avowal of our readiness now to meet them on the same terms as those which we had formerly proposed. In order to prevent the parties being placed in a situation so unfortunate as not to hear of this invitation, we presumed so far as to hand to each of the Unitarian ministers resident in or near London, a copy of the same, accompanied by a letter from our Secretary, respectfully calling their attention to this particular passage. Some of these gentlemen have hitherto maintained a guarded silence; but amongst the *replies* to our invitation which we have to acknowledge, our readers will probably be happy to learn the name of Mr. W. J. Fox, of Parliament Court Chapel, who professes, that “when his health has more completely recovered from the long interruption which it has suffered, he will not object to attend a *public debate* on the subject of *Social Worship*.” The final result of this new effort on our part, with the letters of those who have answered, including the correspondence to which it has led with Mr. Fox, and with some notice of the *no less expressive silence* of the other parties, we may possibly, at no very distant period, lay, in detail, before our readers.

THE QUAKER'S ESTIMATION OF SUNDAY.—In the article on “*Fasts, Festivals, and Sabbaths*,” which appeared in our last number, we, with some hesitation, concluded from the authorities of Barclay and Kersey, that the Quakers attached some *peculiar* reverence to Sunday; in consequence of which, a letter has been sent to us, complaining of a misconstruction of the passage in Barclay; we have, therefore, again looked at the “*Apology*,” and are now, as we before were, “not quite sure” upon the point; and that because of the equivocal, if not contradictory assertions of the author in question; as, however, it will give us much pleasure to correct any misstatement, and also to learn that the “*Friends*” upon this or any other subject are rational and scriptural, we give ready insertion to the communication of our correspondent.

“Having accidentally met with the third number of the *Freethinking Christians' Quarterly Review*, I trust the Editor, who has given so many testimonies of a liberal spirit in that number, will not be disposed to censure me, if I presume to point out a palpable misconstruction of Barclay in his *Apology*, relative to Sunday. The *Review*, in page 240, says, ‘we are not quite sure that even the Quakers, with all their *simplicity*, are quite free from a participation in these pious frauds; for Barclay, in his *Apology*, (349) states of *Sunday*, or the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, that the Quakers agree with Calvin in giving it a spiritual sense.’

“Barclay says, on the part of the Quakers, ‘we cannot be so superstitious as to believe, that either the Jewish Sabbath now continues, or that the first day of the week is the antitype thereof, or the true Christian Sabbath, which we

“ ‘believe (with Calvin) to have a more spiritual sense; and, therefore, we know
 “ ‘no moral obligation by the fourth command, or elsewhere, to keep the first day
 “ ‘of the week more than any other, or any holiness inherent in it.’

“ What fair construction can possibly be put upon this passage, other than that
 “ the Quakers hold every day in the week to be in a spiritual sense the Christian
 “ Sabbath, involving the indispensable duty of daily leading a sober, virtuous and
 “ religious life; and why, for entertaining this sentiment, are the Quakers tanated
 “ with the unseemly sneer of *simplicity and pious frauds*?

“ To hold meetings on that day involves a distinct consideration; and to abstain
 “ from working, why may not a Quaker, as a merciful man, be merciful to his
 “ beast, and to his servants also?—G. H.”

MR. FRIEND'S obliging communication on a paid priesthood, &c. we beg to acknowledge, it will receive consideration and due attention.

Some other miscellaneous communications have been received, and are under consideration.

THE following Subjects are appointed by the Church of God, for the instructions of the Public on the Sunday Mornings, at their Meeting-house, Crescent, Jewin Street, Aldersgate Street.—Time of commencing 11 o'Clock PRECISELY.

Oct. 5.—An explanation of scripture difficulties—Saul and the witch of Endor—Jephtha's vow.

Oct. 12.—BLASPHEMY—its scriptural and modern acceptation.

Oct. 19.—The Conduct and Character of Jesus and his Apostles, contrasted with that of Impostors, Fanatics, and Enthusiasts.

Oct. 26.—The doctrine of the Fall of Man.

Nov. 2.—The Scribes and Pharisees of old compared with their successors in the present day.

Nov. 9.—The universality and benevolence of the dealings of God with man, as exemplified in the Old and New Testament.

Nov. 16.—The character and principles of religious Reformers from the commencement of the Christian era down to our own times.

Nov. 23.—ANGELS—Is there scriptural authority for a belief in the existence of good Angels?

Nov. 30.—ANGELS—Is their scriptural authority for a belief in the existence of bad Angels?

Dec. 7.—The importance to Youth of an early attention to the Christian religion.

Dec. 14.—Rational Devotion—its spirit and effects as compared with fanatical excitement.

Dec. 21.—The scripture doctrine of a Resurrection from the Dead—its importance and evidence.

Dec. 28.—The Character and Conduct of the modern Priesthood—“*By their fruits ye shall know them.*”

| | Page |
|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Adam</i> , creation of, | 141, 378 |
| <i>Armagh</i> , Archbishop of, his charge noticed, | 50 |
| <i>Ass</i> , feast of, | 109 |
| <i>Auto de Fé</i> , the last described, | 110 |
| <i>Bennett</i> , James, his sermon on paying priests examined, | 121 |
| <i>Bible Societies</i> , &c. notice of, | 173 |
| <i>Blasphemy</i> , cases of, by Dryden and Southey, 69—definition of, | 186 |
| <i>Blood</i> , some phenomena of the, | 235 |
| <i>Brain</i> , some phenomena of the, | 232 |
| <i>Brougham</i> , Mr. extracts from his speech, in defence of the Durham Chronicle | 55 |
| <i>Brutes</i> , the question if they have souls | 152 |
| <i>Byron</i> , Lord, his "Vision of Judgment" noticed | 75 |
| <i>Catholic form of marriage</i> | 268 |
| <i>Catholicism</i> described | 42, 44 |
| <i>Christian character</i> , remarks on the, | 61 |
| <i>Christianity</i> , worship of, 103—its corruptions, 106—as a system described | 135 |
| <i>Christmas-Day</i> , on its observance, origin, &c. | 251 |
| <i>Church of God</i> , and its internal discipline | 17, 226 |
| only its members the children of God | 8 |
| <i>Church and State</i> | 94 |
| <i>Clergy</i> . See Priests. | |
| <i>Common-Prayer</i> , on the book of, | 111, 165 |
| <i>Creation</i> , the, as described in the book of Genesis, explained.... | 139, 378 |
| <i>Deacons</i> , their duty amongst "the Independants" | 129 |
| <i>Deism</i> , compared with Revelation, 78—by Napoleon, 178—with Free-thinking | 66 |
| <i>Directory Marriages</i> | 272 |
| <i>Dissenters</i> , their religious character, 158—efforts to get into the establishment, 160—policy at Bible Societies, &c. 174—observance of days, sabbaths, &c. 240—marriages | 267 |
| <i>Dissenting Clergy</i> , on the education and pay of, | 121 |
| <i>Dryden</i> , on his blasphemous Ode on the death of Charles II. | 69 |
| <i>Durham Chronicle</i> , trial of, for libel | 54 |
| <i>England</i> , the church of, its claim for tythes, 52—prosecution of the Durham Chronicle, 54—indifference of its members, 158—history of its articles and liturgy, 162, 245—Bishop of Peterborough's interrogatories, 168—fasts and festivals of, 243, 250—likeness to the church of Rome, 249—its form of marriage examined | 268 |
| <i>Episcopacy</i> in Scotland, 47—described by Robinson | 48 |
| <i>Fall of Man</i> , the doctrine of, disproved, | 136 |
| <i>Fast-days</i> , <i>Festivals</i> , and <i>Sabbaths</i> | 239 |
| <i>Fleet Marriages</i> | 278 |
| <i>Fools</i> , feast of, | 109, 262 |
| <i>France</i> , religious state of, 44—events in, predicted by Flemming, &c. | 85 |
| <i>Freethinker</i> , character of an honest, | 65 |
| <i>Freethinking Christians</i> , account of, by J. Nightingale, 113—their public subjects, 192, 320—extracts from reports of, 17, 226—extract from a letter of one of their body, 353—review of the religious world, 26, 157, 387—of the political world, 76—their ideas of worship, 112—of prayer, 193—their endeavours at controversy with the Unitarians, 194—their exertions relative to the form of Dissenters' Marriages, 287—Marriage protests, | 292, 297, 302, 305, 331 |

| | Page |
|---|--------------------------|
| <i>Fry</i> , Mrs. remarks on her public conduct, 175— <i>notices of a defence</i> of, | 320, 389 |
| <i>Genesis</i> , the early chapters of, explained, | 136 |
| <i>God</i> , not the father of all mankind, 4—regarded by the Jews as their king, 329—peculiar presence of, in the ark, 331—on gratitude towards, 359. See church of God. | |
| <i>Hackney</i> , description of the winter evening conferences at, | 195 |
| <i>Holy Alliance</i> , Ukase respecting, 87—the “second beast” | 88 |
| — things, list of, | 87 |
| <i>Immaterialism</i> . See Soul. | |
| <i>Infidel</i> , the, contrasted with the freethinker, | 66 |
| <i>Jesus</i> , the teaching of, described, 132—his character as described by Deists, 191 | |
| <i>Jews</i> . See Mosaic Dispensation. | |
| <i>Lacon</i> , extract from, | 190 |
| <i>Lawrence</i> , Mr. remarks on his lectures, | 21 |
| <i>Levites</i> , their office, | 341, 350 |
| <i>London</i> , Bishop of, remarks on his charge, | 58 |
| <i>Lord's Supper</i> , on the form of administering, | 164 |
| <i>Man</i> , on the relation in which he stands to God, | 3 |
| <i>Marriage</i> , objections to the present legal form of, stated, 115, 267—origin of that form, 269—historical review, 272—dissenters' marriages 276—the marriage act 277—efforts made for redress 287—Mr. Smith's bill 291, 313—Marquis of Lansdown's bill 317, 412—protests 292, 297, 302, 305, 312—notice of prosecution for libel, respecting an article on, | 410 |
| <i>Materiality of man</i> , evidence of, 33, 148, 232. See soul. | |
| <i>Missionary Societies</i> , &c. notice of, | 38, 173 |
| <i>Monthly Repository</i> , attack on the Freethinking Christians in, 194—extracts from, relative to dissenters' marriages, | 288 |
| <i>Months</i> , pagan origin of our names of, | 256 |
| <i>Moore's</i> , Mr. Thomas, his inquiry into social worship noticed, | 2, 8, 205, 212, 323, 344 |
| <i>Mosaic Dispensation</i> , its worship, 100, 321—Offices of priests and levites | 341, 350 |
| <i>Napoleon's</i> sentiments on religion | 177 |
| <i>Notices</i> | 96, 192, 320, 410 |
| <i>Organization</i> , life and mind the result of, 147, 232. See soul. | |
| <i>Pagan World</i> , the state of, | 218 |
| <i>Passions</i> , influence of the, on the Christian character, | 61 |
| <i>Patriarchal Ages</i> , worship of, | 99 |
| <i>Payne's</i> “Age of Reason” remarks on, | 78 |
| <i>Persecution</i> , on religious, | 180 |
| <i>Personality</i> , on the charge of, in religious controversy, | 205 |
| <i>Peterborough</i> , Bishop of, remarks on his interrogatories, | 161 |
| <i>Pietty</i> , on the means of cultivating, | 359 |
| <i>Poetry</i> , lines on the Freethinking Christians' Quarterly Register | 95 |
| — Paraphrases, | 35, 146 |
| — The Year, | 116, 318 |
| <i>Political World</i> , the Freethinking Christians' review of, | 76 |
| <i>Politics</i> , on the Christian's mixing with, | ibid. |
| <i>Political Governments</i> , how described in the scriptures, | 81 |
| <i>Presbyterianism</i> in Scotland | 48 |
| <i>Priests</i> , crimes and character of, 40—in Spain, 41—in France, 44— | |

| | Page |
|--|-------------------|
| in Scotland, 46—in Ireland, 48—in England, 52—priests of the diocese of Durham, 56—on the pay of, in the establishment, 51—amongst dissenters, 121—on their right to tythes, 51, 53—the hireling described, 59—description of, by Milton, Swift, Hazlett, &c. 156—by Napoleon, 178—office of, among the Jews, | 341 |
| <i>Protests</i> . See <i>Marriage</i> . | |
| <i>Quaker</i> , modern, the pharisaical character, 176, 320—their marriages, 274—their meeting-house described, | 407 |
| <i>Quakerism</i> , review of, 386—its origin, 389—doctrine of the inward light, 389—George Fox, and other primitive Quakers, | 394 |
| <i>Reformed Church</i> , worship of, | 111 |
| <i>Religious Worship</i> , essays on, 1, 97, 193, 321 | |
| — primitive, 98—patriarchal ages, 99, 217—Mosaic dispensation, 100, —in Christianity, 103—corrupted, 106—the dark ages, 108—the reformation, | 111 |
| <i>Religious World</i> , the Freethinking Christians' review of the, 36, 157, 387 | |
| — <i>Age</i> , claim of the present to be one, considered, | 37 |
| — <i>Character</i> , its discipline and improvement, | 353 |
| <i>Rennel</i> , Mr. the Christian advocate, on the soul, | 20, 148, 232 |
| <i>Resurrection</i> from the dead opposed to the immortality of the soul | 19, 147, 231, 365 |
| <i>Retrospection</i> , moral advantages of, | 361 |
| <i>Sabbaths</i> , enumeration of, 243. See <i>fast-days</i> , &c. | |
| <i>Sacrifice</i> , its nature and objects, | 98, 222, 224 |
| <i>Scotland</i> , the king's visit to, 46—the Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches, | 47 |
| <i>Self-examination</i> , recommended, | 355 |
| <i>Soul</i> , essays on the doctrine of the immortality of the, 19, 147, 231, 265—modern writings on the subject noticed, 21—ancient opinions, 25—the fathers, 29—English writers, Bacon, Locke, &c. 31—canons, &c. in favour of, 365—the question stated, 366—the scripture doctrine, 367—Meaning of Greek and Hebrew words rendered soul 2, 370—Explanation of passages, | 371 |
| <i>Southey</i> , Mr. Robert, his blasphemous "Vision of Judgment" noticed, 69—his description of Quakerism, | 409 |
| <i>Spain</i> , religious state of, | 41 |
| <i>Spirit</i> . See <i>Soul</i> . | |
| — on the miraculous gifts of the, | 406 |
| <i>Stephen</i> , on the death of the martyr, | 384 |
| <i>Tabernacle</i> , the Jewish, 102—its contents and worship, | 331 |
| <i>Temple</i> , the Jewish, the house of God, 102—remarks on the offerings for the building of the, | 347 |
| <i>Theocracy</i> , the, described, | 327 |
| <i>Tythes</i> , in Ireland, 49—St. Andrew's, Holborn, | 52 |
| <i>Unitarians</i> , worship of, 111—efforts to enter into controversy with them on social prayer, &c. stated, 194—again invited, 206—replies, 412—on their observance of days, 240—reformed liturgy noticed, 240, 241, 250, 266—their conduct respecting dissenters' marriages, | 287 |
| <i>Virtue and character</i> | 190 |
| <i>Wakefield</i> , Gilbert, his pamphlet on social worship noticed, 207—replies to, | 207 |
| <i>Waldenses</i> , on their persecution, | 184 |
| <i>Worship</i> . See <i>Religious Worship</i> . | |



